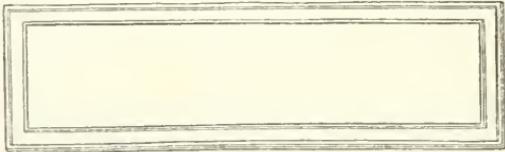
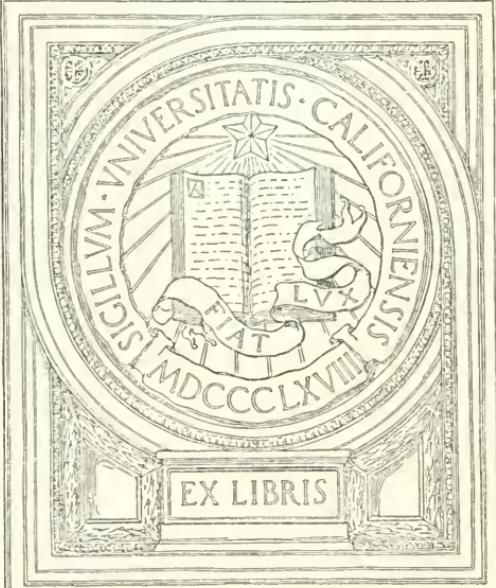




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THE LIFE  
OF  
GEORGE JOACHIM GOSCHEN  
FIRST VISCOUNT GOSCHEN

VOL. I







Walter L. Bolls, Jr.

From a Drawing by S. Dietz, 1843

THE LIFE OF  
GEORGE JOACHIM GOSCHEN  
FIRST VISCOUNT GOSCHEN

1831-1907

BY THE  
HON. ARTHUR D. ELLIOT

*WITH PORTRAITS*

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

SECOND IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
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1911

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## PREFACE

THIS 'Life of the First Viscount Goschen' has been written at the request of his son the present Lord Goschen, who has placed at my disposal all diaries, letters, and papers in his possession bearing on his father's career. The late Lord Goschen, towards the end of his life, put together some recollections of his childhood and early years, and from this autobiographical fragment I have been able to quote. During his visit to Germany, after Rugby and before Oxford, he kept a regular journal from which I have given extracts. He has also recorded some recollections of his early days in Parliament, his interview with Palmerston, his speech seconding the Address, and his journey to Russia; of all which, wherever possible, I have availed myself. At various times he took to making little entries in pocket-diaries, and of these also I have occasionally been able to make use. On events of great importance, such as the Baring Crisis, he sometimes wrote at greater length. But he did not keep any continuous journal of his life.

Of his Mission to Constantinople as Special Ambassador in 1880-81 Lord Goschen left behind a complete account, based upon his own recollections, his jottings at the time, his letters to Mrs. Goschen and friends, and on letters to him from Ministers and others at home. Thus Chapter VII of Vol. I contains substantially Lord Goschen's own history of his Mission, necessarily somewhat abridged.

133.1882

I have humbly and thankfully to express my gratitude to His Majesty the King for allowing the publication of a letter from Her late Majesty Queen Victoria to Mr. Goschen, dated January 5, 1887.

I have also to give my best thanks to the following persons who have kindly allowed me to see or make use of letters and papers under their control, viz. :—

The Duchess of St. Albans, Countess Granville, Lady Haversham, Mrs. Edmond Wodehouse, Mrs. A. Livingstone Bruce, Mrs. Bernard Cracroft, the daughters of Richard Cobden, the Duke of Argyll, the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Salisbury, the Earl of Kimberley, the Earl of Cromer, Viscount Halifax, Viscount Morley of Blackburn, the Rt. Hon. Arthur Balfour, M.P., the Rt. Hon. J. X. Merriman, the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, M.P., the Rt. Hon. Lewis Harcourt, M.P., the Hon. W. F. Smith, Admiral Sir Frederick Richards, G.C.B., Sir R. H. Inglis Palgrave, Colonel Spencer Childers, Mr. Harold Russell, Mr. P. E. Matheson, Dr. Warren (President of Magdalen College, Oxford), the late Rev. Arthur G. Butler, formerly Headmaster of Haileybury, Mr. Charles Cooper (late Editor of the *Scotsman*), Mr. A. Cockburn (President of the Oxford Union).

Dr. Jex Blake (late Dean of Salisbury) and Dr. Franck Bright (Master of University College, Oxford) have kindly given me information bearing on Lord Goschen's early life; and Lord Welby and Mr. W. Graham Greene have given me much assistance with reference to his official work at the Exchequer and the Admiralty respectively; whilst Lord Fitzmaurice has been good enough to read through the chapter bearing on the Mission to Constantinople.

The Proprietors of *Punch* have kindly permitted the reproduction of cartoons of March 18, 1871, and October 3,

1900; and the members of the Whitefriars Club have allowed me to quote from the *Whitefriars Journal*, 1903.

Since the year 1880 I have frequently been able to supplement the narrative of events by recollections of my own, often refreshed by notes made at the time.

I have to thank my nephew, Mr. Hugh S. Elliot, for revising the proofs as they passed through the press.

A. D. E.

27 RUTLAND GATE,  
*February 1911.*



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# LIFE OF LORD GOSCHEN

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

THE earliest ancestor to whom the family of Goschen can trace back their pedigree is a 'worthy parish clergyman' in Saxony, who was living in the year 1609. He professed the Lutheran faith, and bore the quaint latinised name of Joachimus Gosenius. His son, a second Joachim, followed his father's footsteps, took orders as a Lutheran priest, and ministered to a parish for forty years. His descendants seem to have turned from the Church as a profession to follow other careers—some in the law, some in medicine, some in the Civil Service. One of these, a Doctor of Medicine, won distinction in the University of Leyden, and afterwards settling at Bremen, obtained the freedom of that famous Hanseatic city in the year 1706. The doctor's son, Johann Reinhard Göschen, was the first of the family to engage in mercantile pursuits. For a time he was eminently successful in business, achieving a good position amongst the merchants of that great trading community. But the wars of Frederick the Great and individual

misfortunes combined to render his prosperity of short duration, and at length he was compelled to leave Bremen, practically a ruined man, and without the means of providing for his boy, Georg Joachim Göschen, then a lad of thirteen.

The 'Life and Times of George Joachim Göschen,' the grandfather of the English statesman, have been narrated, by the late Lord Goschen, in a work full of interest for all who delight in making closer acquaintance with the 'greatest heroes of the Golden Age of German Literature.' Suffice it to say here that the boy's connexion with literature began with his apprenticeship at the age of fifteen to a bookseller at Bremen, whence he removed to Leipzig to enter one of the foremost publishing houses of that centre of European culture. In 1785 he, with the assistance of Körner, established a publishing business of his own, which rapidly drew to itself the most distinguished writers of Germany.

'He published the first collection of Goethe's scattered writings; he was for a time the housemate of Schiller; he was the bosom friend of Wieland, once the patriarch of the German world of letters; he was in constant correspondence with many other stars in the brilliant Weimar constellation, and with the famous scholars of the University of Jena. Gifted with a striking and often picturesque pen, his letters throw interesting sidelights on the celebrated personalities with whom he came into contact, not only as a writer, but as a man.'

It was William Henry Göschen, the third son of this eminent publisher and the father of the late Lord Goschen, who, in the eventful year 1814—the year of the peace and the year of 'Waverley'—settled in London, where he was ultimately to marry an English wife and to found an English family. That the Leipzig publisher had already

had business connexion with people in England is clear, and in 1815 we find him supplying books to the College Library in Edinburgh. A representative of the Leipzig firm had conferred with Walter Scott, to whom Mr. Göschen had written a grateful letter for according his friend so kind a reception. Scott, probably stimulated by the example of Fraser Tytler (Lord Woodhouselee), who had translated Schiller's 'Robbers,' had begun his literary career by translating from Bürger and Goethe. Nearly twenty years before young Göschen settled in London, Scott, his friend William Erskine (Lord Kinedder), and other active-minded young advocates of the Parliament House, had betaken themselves vehemently to the study of German literature. Mackenzie—the Man of Feeling—had first stirred the flame, and the keen-witted amongst the advocates and students of Edinburgh were now working at the German tongue, and immersing themselves, according to their tastes, in the philosophical treatises of Kant or the dramas of Schiller and Goethe. An intimate friend of Scott's, Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, a devoted student and admirer of German literature, had returned to Scotland shortly before the end of the century, after having spent several years in Saxony. There he must have become closely acquainted with the distinguished circle of men with whom Mr. Göschen associated, and it is not fanciful to suppose that it was the bond of common literary rather than of commercial interests that was the original cause of the connexion between the Göschen family and the English people.

'My third son, Heinrich,' writes the publisher in January 1814, 'who was just starting to join the army, because he did not wish to be behind his brothers, was taken into partnership by a wealthy merchant just as he was on the point of carrying out this resolve, and is now with Susemihl

(his literary representative) in London. Thus the youngster is an established merchant in his twentieth year, and launched on a very fortunate career. But then this Heinrich is quite an exceptional mercantile genius, and what is odd, at the same time a great musician.'

The merchant's name was Frühling, a Bremen man, with whom young Göschen founded the firm of Frühling and Göschen. Of this firm he was the predominant partner for half a century, and his eldest son, the late Lord Goschen, was himself a member of it till he finally abandoned commercial for political life.

'My father,' writes Lord Goschen, 'had prospered in London by means of intense industry, great commercial insight and corresponding thrift; but no breadwinning labour, however intense, diminished the brightness of his intellectual powers or blurred his vision of all the wider aspects of the world. Considering what may soon be called the prehistoric assiduity of the business man, to whom the present fashion of many holidays and shortened hours would have been considered a dangerous and demoralising heresy, it is a marvel to me how my father managed to accumulate an immense stock of historical and literary knowledge. In later times my Oxford friends, when they visited me in my home, were astonished at his intellectual versatility and power of expression, and declared him to be one of the cleverest men they had ever met. Books and music had been the one solace of his bachelor evenings during the fifteen years of his bachelorhood in London. But he was at the same time socially inclined, and many musicians, Mendelssohn among them, had been his friends.'

'In 1829 he had married my mother'—Miss Henrietta Ohman—'as sweet an Englishwoman as ever lived. She proved the most devoted of wives and the most unselfish of mothers, simple, shy, happiest in her own

family circle. The number of her twelve children, of whom ten grew up, absorbed her too much in domestic cares and anxieties for her to be able to develop any intellectual activity, or to share the strenuous literary interests of her husband, but in late life, when she had passed the sixties, and had become a widow with her children scattered, we discovered in her mental powers, a shrewdness of judgment on things in general, and a strength of character, which we had not suspected in our gentle mother, to whom we had looked in our earlier days to shield us when the severe intensity of our father's sense of our duties compelled him to be especially stern.'

George Joachim Goschen, the second child and eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Göschen, was born on August 10, 1831, in a neat little house called Sisters Cottage, with a pretty lawn and garden, standing on the Kingston Road, in the parish of Stoke Newington, now part of London, but then accounted two and a half miles from Town. The firm of Frühling and Göschen was prospering, suburban villas were rapidly destroying the rural character of the neighbourhood, and the family before long found itself able to remove to the still unspoilt country a couple of miles beyond Blackheath, where, close to the pretty village of Eltham, an unpretending but commodious house was found, which became the home of the Göschen family for nearly fifteen years. It was but nine and a half miles from the office in the City, and Eltham, then four miles from the nearest railway station, was served by two stage coaches daily.

'My earliest education I received in common with my eldest sister, Henrietta, from a German lady, a relative of my father, a clever and very sympathetic little old maid, whom we called Aunt Cecilia. Our imaginations were developed very early; our teaching was intelligent and stimulating; our childish mental powers were drawn out.

We were fed with simple romances, fairy tales, so much mythology as was fit for young children. Our games were dramatic; we were trained to parts: at a very early age we composed little plays in verse; but we were well grounded too in the usual elements of education.'

At nine years old the little George was 'withdrawn from this imaginative atmosphere,' and was sent to 'the so-called Blackheath Proprietary School,' exciting the envy of his schoolfellows by riding his pony daily from his home to school. Here he remained for a couple of years happily enough, and without experiencing any of the rough treatment from his companions which might, perhaps, have been expected under the circumstances.

His father at that time contemplated his son's following a mercantile career; he believed, probably rightly, that at a German school he would receive a more thorough education than he would get in England, and he looked to a familiarity with foreign languages as an important element of his future success in business. George accordingly was sent, when eleven years old, to a school in Saxe-Meiningen. The school was a good one. Many English boys, some of them turbulent and difficult to manage, were there to learn German. The masters were admirable, and the boys were thoroughly well trained.

'We lived a rather Spartan life, a simple and for English boys unaccustomed fare—exceedingly early hours, and dormitories so cold in winter that we had to break the ice in our basins with our boots. The peculiarities of a little German town which was a *Residenz-stadt*—the seat of a Court—with its primitive amenities and a capital theatre, amused us English boys, and we enjoyed the privilege of the theatre tickets given to us as prizes for our exercises.'

Several times during the years of his schooling at

Meiningen George spent the holidays with his Saxon relations at his grandmother's house at the village of Hohenstadt, the happy country home of the old publisher, with its manifold literary associations, or at Zscharn in a little manor-house (a 'Rittergut'—a country squire's small domain), where lived his Saxon uncle, an old cavalry officer, who had married the widowed sister of his father. The marriage, though not an unhappy one, was hardly well assorted—she cultured and refined, he primarily a sportsman, coarse, rough and bluff. 'It was a union,' writes the nephew, who was devotedly attached to his aunt, 'between highly civilised woman and primitive man.' Despotic to his own family, the uncle was patronisingly kind to the English boy, 'though the taint of commerce which came from the London merchant's son was of ill savour in the Edelmann's eyes.' During these three years of his life his parents visited him once only at his school, and once only did he go to England for his holidays.

The owner of the school at Meiningen, Dr. Bernhard, was a kind, tactful and sympathetic man, and he had under him excellent masters, so that young Goschen probably learned more than he would have done at an English school. He was well trained in classics, though not in the niceties of what is called 'scholarship,' or in Latin and Greek versification. Indeed, his backwardness in technical scholarship and in Greek composition, which at Meiningen he had not studied at all, was a considerable handicap to him in his English Public School and University career, and he was never quite able to make up the ground that was lost. When he left Meiningen he was amongst the head boys of the school.

The day when George Goschen, at the age of fourteen, went to school at Rugby marked the first step in the career

he was destined to pursue. The three years he had spent at Meiningen had been regarded by Mr. Göschen as preparation for a business life, with a view, no doubt, to his eldest son's ultimately entering his father's firm. In those days a classical education was almost considered a disqualification for a mercantile career, and Mr. Göschen, in sending his boy first to Rugby and then to Oxford, showed that at length he had abandoned all idea of training him to follow in his father's footsteps. The father's ambition had doubtless been stirred by the early recognition of his son's exceptional powers of mind, and when the boy left Meiningen, Mr. Göschen was already setting his heart on his son's achieving a distinguished public career. As that son wrote in after years: 'My father's ambition for me, at all times, was indeed almost a passion. He staked an infinite and pathetic amount of happiness on my success.'

This change of plan, well considered as it was, nevertheless brought for the time being not a little trouble into young George's life. During his three years' schooling in Germany 'a solid foundation of mental material had been laid; but he was ill-equipped for the special style of classical work in English schools,' and he was accordingly sent to the Rev. James Guillemard, vicar of Kirtlington, near Oxford, to have his Latin anglicised and to be got generally into Rugby ways. In August 1845 he joined the school, of which Dr. Tait, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, was then head master, and was placed in the Upper Middle Form.

His few months' 'coaching' with Mr. Guillemard, though doubtless of value as regards his school work, had not sufficed to turn him into a 'typical British boy.' How should it? At Rugby, his German name, his half-German blood, his German schooling, must all have told heavily against him;

though, as an old schoolfellow<sup>1</sup> tells us, he spoke perfect English, and became from the very first a boy of some mark. 'His general cultivation was wider, his enthusiasm was more lively than that of his schoolfellows.' But his start in school life, as the affectionate and entirely unreserved letters he wrote to his parents fully prove, was far from a happy one. The boys teased him and bullied him. He felt at first that he was not liked. He resented rough usage. He longed for the companionship of a true friend, who should be something more than an associate in the business of the classroom and the playground. The boy felt much more than his pride allowed his companions to discover, and in his home letters he makes no attempt to conceal his sensitiveness and his mortification at the failure to win the goodwill of the other boys. Schoolboys' letters are for the most part matter of fact in a high degree. Young Goschen's were an exception. 'I do not know,' he writes from Rugby to his mother in 1846, 'which you like best, to hear matters of fact, or my thoughts and sentiments. For my part I like writing the latter best.'

His father's replies are in a sympathetic and yet manly tone. Troubles such as these can be, and have to be, lived down. A year passed away, and George reports that he is exceedingly happy.

'How glad I am now,' he writes to his father from school, 'that I did not leave Rugby, but stood all the disagreeable worries, etc., which so long made me wretched enough. Last half I certainly was comfortable, but I had not the *Umgang* I wished for, and I could perceive that the *élite* hardly considered me as one of their number. Now, having after all a little bit of pride in me, this mortified me, and brought unpleasant feelings, which perhaps embittered my life a

<sup>1</sup> The Very Rev. Dr. Jex Blake, late Dean of Wells.

little. This, thank goodness, has altered considerably, and I now seem quite to belong to all the rest of the preposters.'

Notwithstanding the civilising influence of Dr. Arnold and his successor, the standard of Rugby was still in some respects far from high. In order to amuse their elders it was a usual practice in the school to set small boys to fight each other without the slightest pretext of quarrel.

'I can still see,' writes the ex-Dean of Wells, 'two pacific scholarly boys, with poor conceptions of the art of self-defence, fighting sixty years ago "behind the chapel" with cumbrous ineptitude; for no cause at all except to amuse the ring. One lived to be a distinguished Headmaster for forty years, first at Manchester Grammar School, and then at St. Paul's School, London; whilst the other was Goschen, younger by a year, but stronger and more determined. They hit wildly, staggering about; and in a few minutes Goschen was the victor. At football, Goschen played "forward"; slow, but persistent.'

Goschen was during his Rugby career at the house of Mr. Bonamy Price, afterwards Professor of Political Economy at Oxford. Mr. Price was at the time teaching one of the higher classes of the school; and some thirty years afterwards the grateful pupil, in a speech at Bristol,<sup>1</sup> records that it was there and by Mr. Price that 'he was first compelled to think'; for in that particular form the boys were accustomed by their sharp, lively and energetic master to analytical and thinking work of a kind they did not get elsewhere. The boy rapidly rose in the school. That he was young for his position and addicted to study did not conduce to his general popularity in his earlier Rugby years. He felt keenly his solitariness, and complained that he was only happy 'when he was

<sup>1</sup> January 15, 1879.

revelling in his books and having a good "swot," or thinking of the satisfaction he was giving to those who loved him at home. He had talked over the subject of friendship, he writes to his parents, with another boy—"and oh! what a different idea he has of it from mine!"—and he proceeds at some length to dilate on true friendship, its nature and its advantages, in a manner which Cicero or Bacon or Emerson would not have disdained.

In his letters to his father and mother the boy's character and nature come out very clearly. High-minded and sensitive, intellectual, industrious and ambitious, overprone perhaps to dwell upon his own thoughts and feelings, he was intensely anxious to realise, for his parents' sake and for his own, the high hopes they had indulged as to their son's career. His home life and his German schooling had done much for him. Already he had acquired high principles, had trained the faculties of his mind, and learned habits of industry. But his father clearly recognised that something more was required if he was to take a front place in active public life in England. He must rub shoulders with English boys and men, in order to become one of them. The rough discipline of his first two years at Rugby was a hard experience no doubt to the sensitive, solitary, thoughtful lad. Still, he was made of manly stuff. His father had understood his son's character, and had judged wisely, and long before young Goschen had become head boy, he and his companions had come to understand each other. He was no longer the stranger, the solitary and the friendless, but one of the most popular as well as one of the most distinguished and respected boys in the school.

The letters of father to son show that the former was by no means inclined to let his boy fall below the very high

standard of energy and industry which he had himself maintained throughout his own hard-working and successful career. Occasionally, though rarely, the father is disappointed with the reports of the master and the temporary non-success of his boy. ‘Carelessness’ and ‘inaccuracy’ are the failings which draw down parental rebuke, or give point to moral and improving reflections. In George’s second year at school, his father assures him that he is as much pleased with his having ‘won distinction, or rather applause, at football, as if he had acquired it in Latin or Greek.’ And he continues, in a vein hardly complimentary perhaps to the boy’s natural prowess in that field, ‘What the will can perform is truly surprising! Important or unimportant matters it is all the same. And if you are as determined in discontinuing writing “although” with double “l” as you were resolved in “following up” fiercely, you will no doubt succeed just as well. There, Sir, is a hint for you.’

It would have been well had the boy paid attention to the ‘hints’ and more than hints that came to him from home, and from much-tried correspondents, as to the illegibility of his handwriting. ‘Few boys,’ says Dr. Jex Blake, ‘ever wrote better sense in several languages, in a worse hand than Goschen.’ In this respect he steadily got worse, and in his latter years he might have spelt as he chose, for no one could have affirmed with any certainty how many ‘l’s’ he might have put in ‘although’! From Meiningen to Rugby, from Rugby to Oxford, from Oxford to the Bank of England, from the Bank to the House of Commons, from the House of Commons to the House of Lords, his writing steadily deteriorated. At length the script became undecipherable even by himself. He could not when speaking in Parliament make out what it was that he had put on paper, and he thus

came in later days to abandon almost entirely his old practice of making notes.

‘You will go very far,’ writes young George to his mother in his days of early depression, ‘before you will find a “swot” who is popular.’ He remained a studious boy, reading far more than his school work necessitated, and especially addicted to historical study. Nevertheless, he was eminently companionable, and he took his fair share in the school games and out-of-door activities. Indeed, his father warns him<sup>1</sup> against too much physical exertion: ‘Your chest is hardly equal to thirteen miles in an hour and fifty minutes.’ And his mother must have greatly rejoiced when the brilliant and happy school career of her son afforded the best comment on the sad reflections and gloomy forebodings of ‘the new boy.’

Though George Goschen rose rapidly in the school it was not till June 1848 that he achieved positive distinction by winning the prize for the English Essay—‘Are the differences observable in various nations to be ascribed to race, or to the force of other circumstances?’ Great was the jubilation at home and heartfelt the congratulations that reached him from his father, ‘on the occasion of this first catch of yours.’ Specially was Mr. Göschen delighted that the success was won in English prose. He was already attempting to get his son’s name down at Oxford, and this distinction came most opportunely, since it would remove, he thinks, from the mind of the Provost of Oriel an impression that young Goschen, with his foreign-sounding name, was hardly an Englishman. A fortnight later came another triumph, and another letter from his delighted father.

<sup>1</sup> November 6, 1849.

‘Glorious indeed. This comes quite unexpectedly! . . . I am convinced this success will make a coxcomb of you. Let us be grateful to Providence for having vouchsafed gifts to you, which may become of great value in the future, and of the good use of which you will have to render an account hereafter.’

For George had won the English Prize Poem of the year, and ten days later was to recite it—‘The Celts’—to the assembled school.

In 1849 George won the Queen’s Medal for the English Historical Essay—‘A comparison between the Political and Social State of England and France at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century with particular references to the subsequent history of each nation’; and in the following year he achieved the greatest triumph of all by winning the prize for the Latin Essay—‘Marcus Tullius Cicero.’ At this time Mr. Göschen was a good deal vexed at the advice given to his son by Dr. Tait and Mr. Price not to go in for a Balliol scholarship, to which George’s own inclinations pointed, even though his doing so might necessitate his leaving school at an earlier date in order to study with a private tutor. The year before, George had, after much hesitation, refused an Oxford Exhibition. His tutor thought he had done wisely.

‘The faults of his mind (intellectually) are exactly those which he would have no opportunity of improving at Oxford, and another year at school may be invaluable to him. He has abilities of a high kind, and his deficiency is in accurate scholarship and matters which school-work ought especially to remedy. In another year,’ Price continues, ‘he would be thoroughly well prepared for Oxford.’

He was not, however, successful in gaining a scholarship

in the spring of 1850 at University, and in the autumn of that year he began his Oxford career as a Commoner at Oriel.

In 1848 there was much excitement at Rugby, at least in the house of Mr. Bonamy Price, caused by the alleged interference of the Masters with the customary 'privileges of the Sixth'—their right apparently to inflict corporal punishment in certain cases. The point of rebellion against Price was very nearly reached, and Goschen excited the alarm of his father and of his old tutor, Mr. Guillemard, by the vehemence of his letters home, his threats of 'cutting Price,' and his readiness to proceed to extremities in maintaining the constitutional rights (as he understood them) of his order. In a wise letter, Mr. Göschen, not a little afraid lest his son in a fit of temper should get himself expelled from the school, pointed out to him the impossibility of successful resistance on the part of the boys to the Masters under whom their parents had placed them; and warned him to consider very seriously whether it was not personal vanity, quite as much as heroic devotion to a good cause, which prevented him from yielding. Fortunately the storm passed over, and peace between the Masters and 'their Worships—the Sixth'<sup>1</sup> was happily restored.

It was during Goschen's last year at school that Dr. Tait resigned the Rugby Headmastership and accepted the Deanery of Carlisle.

'What a pity,' wrote Mr. Göschen to his boy, 'that he does not put it off ten years that you might succeed him! "My son of Rugby," it would please me much!'

The School desired to make Tait a parting gift; Jex Blake was appointed treasurer to receive subscriptions.

<sup>1</sup> *Tom Brown's Schooldays.*

‘What should we give him? “A piece of plate,” said Goschen. “Found prizes or a scholarship,” said Godfrey Lushington<sup>1</sup> and I; but in a “School Levée” Goschen beat us, saying *inter alia*, “Our piece of silver will be on Tait’s sideboard as Dean, as Bishop, and Archbishop,” and I have seen it on Tait’s sideboard in each capacity.’

His father was, of course, highly delighted to hear of the impression made on the assembled school by this first speech.

‘It is a gift or acquirement of eminent use in any office of life, *Gefühl* is the thing as you have found out. It appeals to *Gefühl*, and the work is much quicker and sooner accomplished than by appeal to reason only. I should have liked to hear you thundering forth; the ebullition on the part of your audience, no doubt, must have helped you on wonderfully and I admire and love old Bright<sup>2</sup> for supporting you manfully and vociferously. Nothing like such encouragement on these occasions by friends whom we think much of!’

Abundant was the correspondence that followed with reference to the choice of a suitable piece of plate, which Messrs. Hunt and Roskell had undertaken to provide. At length the day came, and George Goschen, as head of the school, made the presentation in a few simple and appreciative words which evidently came from the heart—the first speech of his reported in the public press; first of all in the *Rugby Advertiser*, whence it was copied into the London papers. Amongst the boys he was recognised as far the best debater in the school, especially in reply, and as the ablest member of their small literary society, writing sentimental verses with fervour, and

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Godfrey Lushington, G.C.M.G., Permanent Under-Secretary at the Home Office.

<sup>2</sup> James Franck Bright, D.D., Master of University College. Few of our contemporaries in 1911 can have enjoyed the title ‘old’ in the middle year of the last century.

criticising the rest with genial acuteness. He made an excellent head of the school, says Dr. Jex Blake. ‘Public-spirited, authoritative, courageous, good company at all times.’ The masters had as much respect for him as the boys.

‘He is,’ wrote Dr. Tait to his father (September 1850), ‘one of the best heads of the school that I have known during my Headmastership, and I am sure Dr. Goulburn will appreciate him as I have done.’

In August 1850 we find the ex-headboy of Rugby, then just nineteen, at Marienbad, staying in lodgings at his ‘Aunt Frühling’s,’ whilst his sister Henrietta was ‘housing with “Aunt Schröter.”’ That month and the next were spent very pleasantly in Austrian Germany and in Saxony—his command of both languages making him equally at home in German and English Society, though, on the whole, he says he preferred the latter. The most interesting Englishman perhaps that he came across in his travels was ‘the poet Monckton Milnes,’ by whose talk he was ‘at first but little struck,’ and with whom he ‘did not get far.’ This, however, was only a first impression, for a few days later Goschen’s journal shows that he found him ‘in the long run amusing, full of anecdote, well read and conversational.’ His conversation indeed was not ‘at all times high toned’; his manners were queer, ‘he fixes himself easily on to a person and seems to wish to know and to talk to everyone.’ Monckton Milnes took a great fancy to the boy, gave him his poems, asked him to dinner and parties, and showed him much kindness in many ways.

Young Goschen’s journal, however, makes it very clear that his thoughts and interests were by no means monopolised by the distinguished men, English and German, amongst whom he was thrown. Monckton Milnes, Lord Breadalbane, accompanied by Dr. Swaine, Lady Frances

Hope, and travelling with her a niece, Alice Lascelles,<sup>1</sup> ‘a fair-haired interesting young lady akin to many dukes,’ were making some stay at Marienbad, and were the foundation of an English Society into which young Goschen was rapidly absorbed. ‘Never was before in such noble company,’ jokingly records the journal, ‘still it is impossible for me to feel humble or inferior. Always equal and republican.’ And we may feel sure that no company got together by the late Lord Houghton at any time of his life was in the least likely to be aristocratically or dully exclusive. At one of his soirées it is noticed that amongst those present were ‘one marquis, two counts, one priest, two doctors, one clergyman, two poets, one beef-steak-eater as thin as a poplar, one lubberly boy, and one deaf man,’ and women probably in equal variety. Certainly about some of these *réunions* there seems ‘to have been nothing stiff or aristocratic. Milnes dressed as a lady, Miss Lascelles with moustache, Pope Joan, etc., very *lustig* indeed, like any other circle, but even a little more *laisser aller*.’ Poor Henrietta, George’s eldest sister and confidant, seems to have felt herself a little left in the lurch by her brother’s gay companions, and began to take despondent views of what might ensue. George was tempted to fall away, she thought, from the strictness in which they had been brought up. After much searching of the heart, he determines to go to a ball on a Sunday night—‘but I can scarcely tell whether from weakness or conviction. The fact is, I am not sure of my own creed in this respect, and the word “hallowed” or “keep holy” must be studied. I had given Henrietta the greatest distress on a former occasion, because she thought I was apostatising “from my church.”’ He *did* go to the ball, he *did* amuse himself,

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of the Rt. Hon. W. Lascelles. She afterwards married Mr. Charles William Grenfell, M.P., of Taplow Court, and died in 1911.

and we are glad to know that he did *not* feel very penitent. And then the diary, by an easy transition, slides from the interpretation of the Fourth Commandment into a comparison between English and German dancing and the advantages offered by the one system and the other to those who are flirtatiously inclined! The piety and the gaiety are equally genuine. Indeed, the entire absence of insincerity and affectation is a marked characteristic of everything written by George Goschen, whether it was intended to be read by others, or to meet no eye but his own.

His father, not less than his sister, had his fears for George, but they were of a different kind. Mr. Göschen was hearing much, too much he thought, of 'the Hopes' and their young friend, and when his son altered all his plans of travel in order to accompany them to Prague and to Vienna, the prudent parent thought it time to send a solemn warning against the dangers of too sudden an intimacy, and the disappointments that might grow out of it. George had a pleasant time, enjoyed the sight-seeing and the travelling with congenial companions, and hardly less, perhaps, though in a different way, two or three long, solitary rambles in the midst of mountain scenery. For natural scenery, especially wild scenery and mountains, always had the effect of turning his impressionable nature to solemn and devotional thoughts. When he had completed his little tour in Austria he returned again to his sister and friends at Dresden. The fair-haired Miss Lascelles had left the stage; but 'the very dark glossy hair and the brightest dark eyes in the world' of Marie Haak, Henrietta's bosom friend, rapidly told with still more devastating effect, for the time being at least, on a susceptible heart. The inevitable separation came; so on the last day of September George reached home in the glummest of spirits, and in bad humour

with sister, with parents, with himself, and with the whole world.

This little journal, kept for a couple of months in the summer of 1850, is all that exists in the nature of a continuous diary in which are recounted the experiences, the interests, the thoughts and reflexions, as they came to him from day to day. Eminently sociable and popular, he formed rapid intimacies both with man and woman, and invariably he drew out the best side of those he came across. The little vignette sketches in words, in which he rapidly touched off some of the acquaintances, English and German, made during his travels, are full of life, and show how keenly he observed and read character. He was impressed by scenery, interested in the sights, the museums, and picture galleries of the towns, and in the political talk of men acquainted with the circumstances and conditions of the people amongst whom he was staying. But, as he had said to his mother when a young Rugby boy, he preferred writing about his thoughts and feelings to recounting matters of fact. His nature was emotional and he felt the necessity of giving his emotions expression. His journal therefore makes a far franker revelation of the writer himself than would be found in the ordinary diary of a travelling Englishman. His poetic pen, which at school had perforce occupied itself with such themes as 'The Celts' and 'The Death of Moses,' now drew inspiration from a different quarter. He had no desire to conceal his poetic gifts from his lady friends, amongst whom his verses became in great request. One of them beseeches him to write for her a poem on the moon. The request was made 'nicely, beautifully and enchantingly. There was an *Innigkeit* in her that sparkled in her beautiful dark eyes.' How could he have refused even had he wished to? His stay abroad had evidently been productive of a

good deal of poetry, and he kept it up to the end. In crossing the Channel in rough weather on the way home he even composed a stanza the better to concentrate his thoughts and dispel the distracting incidents of the voyage. One of the first evenings at home was spent in reading his poetry to the home circle. His father appears to have been 'critical'; and the poet missed, all the more for the contrast, the sympathetic appreciation his verses had met with abroad from those for whom they were written.

It was now well on in October, and his Oxford life was about to begin. On the 17th the last entry was made in his journal and ran as follows:

'... Trümpler' [an old Meiningen schoolfellow and for many years an intimate and valued friend] 'came to dinner; enjoyed a delightful evening with him. *Tête-à-tête* till 12½; metaphysical, psychological, physiological, phrenological, conversation. I certainly *do* enjoy talking with him, and I am glad to find that to him I really hang. Here is the last evening before my college life, a momentous moment, treated, however, with improper levity by me. Persiflage. Shall I like Oxford? Will Oxford like me? How many of these questions are going to and fro, yet I am as nonsensical and boyish as ever. Sometimes a religious idea just passes thro' my head, and some better and more serious thoughts force themselves upon me. But somehow or other they vanish in a moment dispelled by levity and trifling ideas. Thus far then, I have been persevering enough to keep up my faithful and authentic diary. Oxford shall begin a new book.'

It was a book that once opened was to close finally only with his life. In the middle year of the nineteenth century George Goschen began residence as a Commoner of Oriel. It was in the eighth year of the twentieth century that Lord Goschen died, the Chancellor of the University of Oxford,

full of years and of honours, and to the last full also of an almost youthful vitality of intellect, taking still that keen interest both in persons and things which had from boyhood been one of his strongest characteristics.

George Goschen's old Rugby friend, Jex Blake, soon followed him to Oxford, and in March 1851 we find him competing for and winning a scholarship at University College. Goschen, then in the second term of his freshman's year, was in for it too ; so also was Franck Bright, afterwards Master of University, all three close friends during life. Jex Blake was so much alarmed at finding Goschen a competitor that he was on the point of returning forthwith to Rugby. Bright, however, persuaded him to stay on and try his luck, and to the general astonishment (according to the Dean of Wells himself), the three leading fellows and examiners—viz. Arthur Stanley,<sup>1</sup> Goldwin Smith, and John Conington—elected him and not Goschen a scholar of University. ‘Goschen ran me very hard,’ wrote young Jex Blake to his father (March 1, 1851), ‘I am sorry for Goschen ; he is making, I doubt not, a splendid speech at the Union just now.’ And Arthur Stanley, with whom Jex Blake breakfasted after the election, told him that ‘Goschen was next and very near’ and that the examiners were very much pleased with his papers.

A scholarship at University College was at that time specially to be desired by men who aimed at achieving distinction in classical honours ; ‘for good tutors are worth a good deal,’ and the three leading fellows of University enjoyed high fame in and outside the world of Oxford.

‘Goschen made a very eloquent and brilliant speech,’ wrote Jex Blake to his father from Rugby in another letter,

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Dean of Westminster.

‘about the Papal Aggression in the Oxford Union the other day, and on the right side too. He is far the most eloquent person I ever heard anywhere; and I think the only genius we have had at Rugby since my time. He is not a good scholar. But he got, you will remember, The Queen’s Medal, The English Prose, the English Verse and the Latin Prose here [at Rugby]; was 3rd in the Exhibition Exam. 1849; and 4th in 1850.’

Of a rather later period Franck Bright writes :

‘It was not till we met at Oxford that I really knew him at all intimately. The early death of my brother (a most attractive person) just at that time seemed to make me the heir of his friendship, and from that time onwards my intimacy with Goschen was established. The next clear picture I have of him is in his rooms at Oxford, whither he had preceded me, and where he gave me hospitality while I was up for my matriculation. The gravity of the subjects discussed in his rooms, and the lightness with which they were touched made a very vivid impression upon my school-boy mind. He had already collected about him many of those with whom he lived intimately during his college time. Beck, an old Rugby friend, F. Longe from Harrow, Charles Pearson, C. E. Johnson (of Exeter), and others. A better example of the more intellectual side of Oxford undergraduate life could scarcely be afforded than that furnished by his room that night. And so always the conversation in his company invariably touched on serious and important matters. He was as far as possible from priggishness. His sense of humour was quite unusually strong, his tolerance of folly and boyishness (I do not think of stupidity) was very marked. He was what the slang of the day calls thoroughly “human,” and he enjoyed to the full the lighter side of college life.’

At the Union his fame was established. The speech which most struck his friend Bright was one in defence of Shelley :

'excellent both in its eloquence and as a piece of criticism. As a young man he had a curious love of analysis, he was always pulling his own mind and his own opinions to pieces. Both sides of every question were usually very clear to him and the reasons, pro and con., ranged in well-ordered regiments on either side.'

This habit of his went far, and continued with him throughout life. His conclusions were not determined till after he had very carefully pondered and weighed. In later years and in matters of administrative detail he often surprised his friends by postponing till the last moment a final decision. Yet in matters of political principle, and as regards broad lines of action, no statesman was ever less vacillating or more firmly consistent.

It was in the summer term of 1852 that the idea occurred to Goschen of forming a society for intellectual discussion. The original members were seven. Arthur Butler, the first head master of Haileybury, and Charles Parker<sup>1</sup> of University, H. N. Oxenham, George Brodrick<sup>2</sup> and W. Fremantle<sup>3</sup> of Balliol, and Charles Henry Pearson of Exeter. It was afterwards joined by Franck Bright, Frederic Harrison, Grant Duff, and others. The 'Essay Club' for many years had an annual dinner in London.<sup>4</sup>

In a large envelope docketed 'Notes for Union Speeches' there still exist a number of loose sheets of George Goschen's manuscripts, in some cases forming a more or less arranged essay or speech, in others mere notes to aid the memory. Other sheets contain carefully prepared phraseo-

<sup>1</sup> Charles Stuart Parker, afterwards M.P. for Perthshire, and Perth City. Editor of Sir Robert Peel's *Papers*.

<sup>2</sup> The Hon. George Brodrick, afterwards Warden of Merton.

<sup>3</sup> The Hon. W. Fremantle, the present Dean of Ripon.

<sup>4</sup> *Memorials of Charles Henry Pearson*, edited by William Stebbing (Longmans, 1900).

logy and sentences intended for telling delivery. In a speech denouncing the Derby Ministry of 1853, Goschen resists with vigour the censures levelled by the violent ruck of the Tory party against the Peelite seceders ; and it is interesting to find in almost the earliest of his political orations a warm defence of Mr. Gladstone, then, of course, a very leading Peelite, and member for the University of Oxford. Party feeling ran high in those days, as in these. But it was then still possible for men to hold a conception of the meaning of the word 'party' corresponding rather with the famous definition of Burke, than with the meaning attached to it in these later times of the Caucus. As Member of Parliament and responsible statesman George Goschen was afterwards to show to the end of his career that, for him at least, 'party' meant precisely what it had meant to the Oxford undergraduate.

'He who joins a party, as a party, at the first commits a fatal error which it will be difficult to retrace. He who procures the dependence of others has sold his own independency of will ; he who has fettered his actions by joining a party, not by conscientiously subscribing to a creed, has committed a crime against his country, and done himself an injury of which he must reap the fruits. If he pawns his judgment to buy up votes, his fortunes must rise high indeed before he will be able to redeem what he pledged. Then perhaps (it) may not be called perfidy, if he break the iniquitous covenant he made. Gladstone has never either surrendered his judgment or broken a compact made. He has neither incurred the scorn which honest men feel for leaders without principle, and followers without conscience, nor has he incurred the infamy of a faithless partisan. But he who subscribed not to the regulation of a party, but to political principles, joins others to work them out, attached to them by ties which only last so long as the principles,

which they together are advocating, continue in his sight to be true. . . . No one thing is so calculated to inspire us with confidence as the conviction that those in whom we are to confide are themselves convinced of the soundness of their own principles—that they have faith in their cause and in themselves. . . . In spite of prejudices abundantly displayed in the course of this debate, consistency is not the highest form of virtue nor inconsistency one of the worst forms of crime. To lay too much stress upon it is eminently dangerous. It is to hold out inducements to men to continue in error after they have discovered it, to lend a deaf ear to argument, lest their convictions which they are bound never to alter should receive a shock. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Goschen was not one to be satisfied with being a good second, and with receiving the praise of examiners. Three

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the speeches referred to on 'Papal Aggression' and 'Shelley,' Goschen, at the Oxford Union, spoke in favour of the motion that 'the Author of "In Memoriam" may justly be called the Poet of the Nineteenth Century.' He supported the State endowment of Maynooth, and opposed the admission of Jews to Parliament.

In 1851 he opposed a motion that 'the present state of England imperatively calls for a remedy against the concentration of large masses of capital in the hands of a few individuals,' and the following year he resisted a motion 'that the increasing power of the great towns is opposed to the idea of the English constitution, and inconsistent with the national prosperity.' In November 1851 Goschen himself moved that 'the French Revolution of 1789 was justifiable, and has conferred the greatest benefits on mankind,' to which his friend Arthur Butler moved the amendment that 'a revolution was necessary in France, but that it is premature to pronounce definitely concerning the good effects resulting from it, in consequence of the excesses in which the Revolution terminated.' Both motion and amendment were lost.

Goschen was secretary of the Union in the Easter Term 1851. The following Easter he became treasurer, Arthur Butler succeeding him as secretary. In Michaelmas Term 1853 he became president.

Throughout his life Goschen retained his interest in the Oxford Union, and attended the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary in 1873. On Lord Goschen's death in 1907 the then president Mr. N. S. Talbot moved, in an eloquent and impressive speech, seconded by Mr. W. G. C. Gladstone, the adjournment of the House out of respect to their revered ex-president and Chancellor. [I am indebted for the above information to the kindness of Mr. Archibald W. Cockburn, President of the Union in 1910.—A. D. E.]

months after his defeat by Jex Blake for the scholarship at University, he entered the field with high hopes for a scholarship at Trinity. A second failure he takes deeply to heart. He had been 'grinding hard against the grain at composition and scholarship.' According to all reports, and his own belief, success was almost certain. Yet he failed; one of the examiners declaring that he was by far 'the cleverest man in, but showed deficiency in scholarship.' Another Trinity Don had said that, however clever, 'scholarship was not his forte.' No wonder Goschen should write to his father in a tone of much mortification, all the more that, as he says, a lack of scholarship in the high Oxford sense by no means *always* sufficed to exclude a man of undoubted and general ability. This exclusion seldom befalls

'a man of what they technically call "power." It carries him through (with a fair knowledge of his books) against scholarship and is the more safe ground to rely upon, not to speak of its much greater value afterwards. Now "power" I have at least the reputation of possessing. The Trinity man who most abused my scholarship, thought I might acquit myself brilliantly in the schools under the new system. Only their old crotchety statutes and more crotchety old grey-headed fools take for scholars only those who have a certain knack for Latin and Greek verse. . . . Therefore, don't be discouraged at my prospects in the least. I do not fear. I *feel* my power. . . . But what I must do is clear, not to attempt any more a line in which I am destined to fail, but to throw myself fully into my own line. Aristotle, Plato, philosophy, logic, history, and generally my books, instead of pursuing any longer what it seems I am not to obtain. Now all this is as I say to persuade you, as I am persuaded myself, that I need not be distressed about the future of my academical career. At the same time I am intensely annoyed and vexed and am in

the most diabolical humour about the present failure. I cannot bear to be beaten—either by men or subjects, and I have been beaten by both. Butler says, “I have always made scholarship only my mistress and not my wife, and that my heart has never been with it.” And there is some truth in this. . . .”

Mr. Göschen’s reply, June 17, 1851, to his son’s outbreak is judicious, and indicative of his own determined character. Perhaps Arthur Butler was right, and his son’s heart had never been in scholarship. But should he not stick to it, even against his own inclination? Considering the modern system of education, ‘scholarship’ cannot be lost sight of.

‘Bear this well in mind. . . . Something wrong in the State of Denmark there must be, when so many men agree in their views. None of them has ever denied that there is cleverness enough in you. Had old Rothschild tried for a scholarship, he would not have obtained it, but a cleverer man than any of his examiners he would have remained in their own estimation, and every one of them would have been glad to exchange places with him. I implore you, therefore, do not throw scholarship aside in the least degree, do not try any more for “scholarships,” but continue the study with vigour, for you will rue it hereafter, if you go backwards in it. . . . Still you will have to work like a tiger in your own line. . . .’

There were no more failures in Goschen’s academical career. In May 1852 he obtained a First Class in Moderations to the delight of his parents and friends, and his father’s joy knew no bounds when later in the year an Exhibition in his own college of Oriel, greatly to his son’s surprise, was awarded to him.

‘I was sitting quietly in my rooms,’ he writes to his father, ‘poring over a philosophical work when I was

interrupted by a friend who had come in to congratulate me. I stare at him and doubt whether he is mad, or whether perhaps I was practically illustrating the paragraph I had been reading, which told me that the senses of man could not be implicitly relied upon. However, he tells me that an exhibition had just been given me. It was a close exhibition for which the examination had been going on. The candidates in had been rejected, and they had found by the will that they could alienate it, so they gave it to me, because, says Chrétien,<sup>1</sup> I was the best man in College.'

He was naturally very much elated, and declared that 'he would sooner have had this honour in this way, untried for, than if he had had some good competitors and had beaten them.' It was worth some £30 a year for seven years, if he continued in residence ; but its worth to him was out of all proportion to its pecuniary value. It gave him a position, and it was 'an omen of future success in standing for a fellowship.' Goschen writes in high spirits, and finishes his letter with a glowing description of his recent performance in another arena.

' I had too *un grand succès* at the Union the night before —a speech on Shelley no word of which was written or prepared, but in which I succeeded entirely to attack and defeat the argument, and finally to run away with my audience at the end. The Thursday before, I managed a *debating* speech, and thought I had got on admirably till I beat myself hollow the week following as to applause. In the former being a political subject, I attempted no flight of eloquence, or rhapsodical peroration, but kept to my argument hardly and pointedly on purpose, but creating great amusement by smashing an adversary or so. But on the poetical subject I felt myself at liberty to gratify the Society with a speech I know they always like, of enthusiasm, poetry, language and feeling. The language I am glad to

<sup>1</sup> Tutor of Oriel.

say I seem almost to have mastered and I am now increasing the debating faculties vigorously. As I now speak with very little preparation, it is capital practice, without being a tie upon my time. . . . I am sure I have greatly improved my whole style by these rhetorical exercises. . . .'

His father's reply (November 9, 1852) overflows with joy and pride, and, as usual with him, a deeper note is struck.

'It is a good omen, this extraordinary occurrence, and we cannot be too thankful to God for having given you mental power, bodily health, and the right spirit to achieve so much. As you say, it is impossible for a few days not to indulge to some degree in a little vanity; but it will not last long. You are not the character to dwell long on the glitter of the thing, you will immediately pierce through to the real value, and look upon your acquisition as a proof that you are able to perform much, if you put your shoulder to the wheel, that much remains to be performed, and therefore that you have every encouragement for the necessary exertions.'

And accompanying the letters were bonds to the value of £2000.

Still another year passes, and in November 1853 Mr. Göschen receives at Leipzig the news by telegraph of his son's First Class. His letter to his son (November 20) is written in the same spirit of joy and deep thankfulness.

'How had Butler and Beck fared? Oh that they also had gained firsts! Would not bonfires be lighted at Rugby and two holidays be granted! Price will crow till he is hoarse. Tait will be delighted. Boy, boy, you give noble pleasure to many!'

Young Jex Blake, writing to his father immediately the result of the examination was known, says:

'Goschen was the best First in, and an uncommonly good one. Butler the next best, and Lothian the third.

Then came much in a bunch, Beck, Wood, Thorley, Inge, Stebbing. Then Brodrick, Campbell, Kekewich, etc. . . . Goschen all but plucked for divinity. . . .

With the taking of his Bachelor's degree and the leaving Oxford in the winter of 1853, George Goschen's formal education was completed. In 1854 he entered upon the business of life. In a wider sense indeed he never finished his education. He was always learning both from men and from books. But by the time he was twenty-three, his character had received its bent ; he had become acquainted with his own powers, his aspirations had taken definite shape. It probably rarely happens for the Public School boy and the Oxford undergraduate to reveal, in diary or letters to relations and friends, so much of his inmost thoughts and feelings. He loved introspection almost from the days of his childhood. A curious fragment remains of the beginning of an autobiography written by him in the early part of his Oxford career for the benefit of his old Rugby friend and regular correspondent—Lovelace Stamer<sup>1</sup>—then an undergraduate at Cambridge. The latter, who had been much interested in reading Horace Walpole's letters, which had begun in undergraduate days, conceived the idea of maintaining with George Goschen a regular 'Walpole and Mann' correspondence, and for a long time between the two the interchange of letters was maintained. Each undertook to supply the other with a history of his own life from his earliest recollections up to date. The only portion of George Goschen's biography that remains unfortunately ends just where 'the mythical and legendary age of childhood' begins to give place to the contemporary written evidence, upon which history might be founded.

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Lovelace Stamer, Bart., and Bishop Suffragan of Shrewsbury ; died 1908.

The facts related are worth little, but the temperament of the undergraduate narrator—his attitude towards himself—is full of interest.

‘MY DEAR STAMER,

‘At last you see I have brought myself to begin my autobiography which I am going to write, as I once told you, for a double purpose; in the first place with a view to amusing you, and making you better acquainted with myself, than you can possibly be at present, and, secondly, with the purpose of investigating the steps by which I have become what I am at this moment, of tracing my character, feelings and opinions, and of explaining the changes which I have undergone. For I must confess that I think myself very much out of the common way (I say it neither in praise nor in blame), something different from other people; and it is the reason for this which I intend to look for. I will prematurely state that I consider this to be the result of my two nationalities, the grafting of English sentiments and feelings upon German blood, and one continual change that has been going on in me is the gradual passing from the German to the English. My home, beyond which as a child one knows nothing, was in my very early childhood very German. But when I got away from home to English schools and my home itself gradually grew more English the German part of my nature shrank before the other.’

And then he proceeds in joking imitation of Grote to plan out his ‘life history in great divisions’—to separate ‘the traditional, mythical, and fabulous from the authenticated historical period’; the first extending from his birth till he went to school in Saxony, the second onwards till he left Rugby.

Lord Goschen in his later years would probably have entirely endorsed this appreciation of the formation of his own character, in which assuredly both the German and

the English elements were strongly marked. From Germany came the love of music and poetry which so greatly influenced his writings, his analytical mind, his fondness for statistics, his habit of working long hours, his disinclination to idle; whilst England supplied or grafted on to these attributes his courage, firmness, and consistency. His extreme sensitiveness was, perhaps, rather the result of circumstances than an inborn characteristic. It was surely not unnatural that an English boy, sent as early as he was to a German school, with consequent long absences from his home in a foreign country, should have become shy and sensitive and introspective, and his treatment during his early days at Rugby served rather to intensify than to diminish these feelings.

In the diary written during the interval he spent abroad between Rugby and Oxford nothing is more remarkable than the sudden change of tone that reveals, in the midst of all his social happiness, his delight in travel, and his boyish flirtations, the deeply serious and devotional side of his nature. He greatly enjoyed beautiful scenery, and he comments thus on the thoughts to which a solitary stroll in the mountainous country near Salzburg had given rise:

‘I have found an effect which I have found before in beautiful scenery, especially at evening time, that of devotion and religious feeling, arising something above my usual ways, better thoughts and better feelings arise in me.’

And again, when recording an expedition he had made alone the following day in the glorious country near Halstadt:

‘I never enjoyed anything so much,’ he writes, ‘as this walk. My feelings remained pure and high and very devotional, full of love to God and man. The thought passed

through my mind that I was not spending Sunday amiss to make a tour like this. Nothing so much raises me to God. From religious thoughts and feelings I passed to poetry, and this brought me to the lake of Halstadt.'

In politics his love of freedom made him a Liberal. 'What do you say to your Whig friends now?' is the taunting question occasionally addressed to him by Conservative correspondents. This spirit of freedom breathes in his poem 'The Celts,' which won the prize for English verse at Rugby in June 1848.

'What if the fragments of a shattered race  
Mid newborn times and nations find no place?  
The Celtic soul that breathes so bold and free,  
Became the soul of deathless liberty;  
And Europe's self, thro' all her veins has felt—  
Still feels the quenchless spirit of the Celt.

Perished the tree! the howling tempest broke  
The hallowed grandeur of the Celtic oak!  
Withered the beauty of the mantling crest,  
That spread its giant shadow o'er the West;  
The branches drooped and faded one by one,  
Until the stem stood childless and alone;—  
Itself has fallen! The Celtic oak is gone.

We see its shadow slowly pass away,  
And mournful darkness veiling its decay;  
The glen is lonely, the grey moors are still,  
And life is setting on the silent hill;  
Where rang the pibroch or the slogan yell,  
On steep wild cliffs,—along the lake,—the dell,  
Now thrills the farewell song across the seas,  
The sad notes echoed from the Hebrides;  
The phantom drifts to solitude and rest,  
And sighs are wafted faintly from the West,  
There is a home beyond the dark blue wave,  
On Celtic shores denied, the silence of the grave.

Fifty-five years after this poem was written, Lord Goschen, in a very brilliant after-dinner speech, mentioned that he had shown it shortly before to Mr. Justin M'Carthy, the leader for a time of those Irish Nationalists in conflict with whom so much of Lord Goschen's political career was passed, and 'he was much flattered by Mr. M'Carthy saying that he would wish to keep it.' It was in that speech, at the Whitefriars Club, that he described to an appreciative and greatly delighted audience his early attempt to climb 'the slopes of Helicon.'

'At Oxford, needless to say, I became a candidate for the Newdigate Prize. You know, gentlemen, the kind of thing—rhetoric in rhyme, grand, heroic, antithetical, alliterative. The subject was "Belshazzar's Feast." (Much laughter.) It did not suit me. (Laughter.) My poems were not descriptive, but heroic :

"Ho! Bring the cups, the golden goblets bring;  
A godlike chalice, for a godlike king!  
Bring forth the cups! 'Twould be a draught divine—  
In Hebrew vessels, Babylonian wine."

(Much laughter.) Rhetoric in rhyme did not succeed. The prize was not assigned to the composer of these heroic lines. On that occasion there entered into the lists against those who thought they possessed the power of verse, a man who was a real poet.<sup>1</sup>

This was Sir Edwin Arnold, author of the 'Light of Asia,' and he it was who won the prize.

In 1853 Lord Derby, the ex-Prime Minister, visited Oxford, and the forthcoming event was made by young Goschen the subject of a poetical and political skit, entitled 'Lines to the Tories of Oxford, affectionately addressed by

<sup>1</sup> Quoted, by permission of the Whitefriars Club, from the *Whitefriars Journal*, February 1903.

a Friend.' His party proclivities naturally appear as unmistakably and strongly in these lines as in his speeches at the Union.

' Derby, come ! review thy army ! Wildly will thy soldiers cheer,  
When the Chivalry of England plants its lordly banner here.  
Derby, come : a grand ovation waits thee in these classic halls  
Where the minds of thy admirers are as time-worn as the walls—  
Where the strength of thought and knowledge, like the sandstone, crumbles fast,  
In the City of the Tories, in the Castle of the Past.

• • • • •  
What tho' through the breadth of England, other names and creeds be loved,  
Other feelings stir the nation, to gigantic action moved.—  
Stronger energies awakened, dare with bolder thoughts to cope,  
While the sunshine of the future lights the dawning forms of hope.  
In romantic nooks and hamlets, in primeval country towns,  
In the halls of squires and farmers, in the huts of simple clowns,  
In the kennel and the stable, still they hold the creed divine.  
And the heart of Alma Mater ever, ever, shall be thine !

• • • • •  
Shout ! for who convicts the shouter ? Shout ! for what defeats a yell ?  
Scream your enemies to silence,—noise becomes the Tory well.

Divers men by divers talents in the press of life succeed,  
Some by impulse, quick to action, some by force of truth  
and creed ;  
Some by power of thought and passion, some by charm of  
voice and tongue,  
And the Tory, nobly gifted, conquers by his strength of  
lung.'

Mr. Göschen's letters to his son, as time passes on, indicate, of course, the boy's widening interests and his growing capacity to share his father's concerns. They continue, as at first, to urge him to industry and effort, and to cure himself of his besetting sin of carelessness ; whilst they are instinct with the devotional and spiritual feelings which, as we have seen, his son so largely shared. In his last year at Oxford politics and the business of the father's firm began to claim attention in the correspondence. Mr. Göschen was a Whig and a Free Trader, and consequently viewed with great dislike the Derby-Disraeli Administration of 1852. That Ministry was turned out by the combined Whigs and Peelites during the last days of the year. In the ensuing year the differences with Russia became acute, and Mr. Göschen's sympathies were with the bold line advocated by Palmerston, rather than with the pacific, hesitating and timid counsels (as they seemed to him) of the Prime Minister, Aberdeen. The times were anxious, especially for merchants who had a considerable stake in Russian business, and we find Mr. Göschen telling his son of the efforts the firm were making throughout 1853 to reduce the amount of its Russian indebtedness. When difficulties with Russia first began 'we had £100,000 there at stake, all very safe and good in common times, and even under adverse circumstances not exactly jeopardised, but it might have happened that a dead lock up had been the consequence.' The firm, he continues,

had now diminished the amounts of its claims on Russia to £40,000, of which sum £23,000 was the value of a cargo of sugar, in respect of which the Russian merchant was remitting in instalments of £200.

‘The exchange being favourable he desired me to draw £15,000 upon him three months date, which we did yesterday. Thus we have £15,000 in our pocket, but our engagement *pro tanto* does not cease, because should that Russian after 3 months not pay his acceptances, we must refund the money to Mr. Hambro here, to whom we had sold the bills. I trust you will understand this. Try to do so. We did willingly draw for 3 months for two reasons. In the first place, this Russian gentleman, Mr. Ponameroff, would take more than 3 months to remit this £15,000. . . . the man is quite safe. Secondly, we fix by drawing the time of payment. And we take it out of the power of his Imperial Majesty to say to the Russian Merchants one of these days: “Let me know what you owe the Englishmen, pay me instead of them, and if you conceal any debts to Englishmen, I shall send you to Siberia.” There is some danger in that, for suppose the English take private property on the high seas, which they have always done, and which they almost are compelled to do, in order to hold out to sailors the encouragement of prize money. Why should not Nicolas say as Napoleon in his day did say: “If you rob my subjects on the water, I shall rob yours by land; there is no distinction.” Habits being more gentle and humane in modern times, such robberies by water in the shape of making prizes are infinitely more revolting and retaliations become more probable. Thus you see, we want our debtors who still have three months time to remit and will take that time to accept bills; such bills go into the hands of Russians, who will become claimants instead of ourselves, and then that danger is past. We are at work to adopt that plan with every one of the others and hope to succeed in a very short time.’

Thus young Goschen, whilst still an undergraduate, was hearing something of the way in which political and mercantile considerations affected each other. Whilst training for the House of Commons in the debates at the Oxford Union, he was getting practically into touch with international commerce and the mysteries of 'foreign exchange.' On leaving Oxford he at once took an active part in his father's business, and in September 1854 he was sent by the firm to superintend their affairs in New Granada. In business he never was an amateur. In that as in everything else he was thorough. Mr. Göschen several years later said to Jex Blake: 'They call George the ornamental partner in our firm. *I* call him the driving wheel of the machine.'

Very soon after young Goschen had taken his degree, he took another step more important in life. He became engaged to the young lady he afterwards married, Miss Dalley, a daughter of Mr. John Dalley, whom he had first met in his father's house. George was very young, his prospects though hopeful were not assured, and it is hardly surprising that his father, ever anxious for his son's career, should for a time have withheld approval of a match which it seemed to him was much more likely to burden than to advance George's worldly fortunes. He may perhaps also have at first failed to distinguish the strong and permanent passion which had now taken possession of the young man's whole being from the boy's enthusiastic fancies of three or four years earlier. This time, at all events, it was no case of the idling of 'three careless moons.'

'The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing. . . .'

George Goschen, though young, was not now acting on mere heedless impulse, or without taking a good

look round at all the circumstances and difficulties of the case. The pros and the cons even here were not forgotten. Dr. Bright describes how George had come bursting into his rooms at Oxford on their return after the Vacation in 1853 with an enthusiastic account of his recent proceedings, and of his hopes of future happiness. Such difficulties as seemed to stand in the way of their realisation were not overlooked, but must be surmounted.

‘I am proud to say,’ comments Dr. Bright, ‘knowing the lady as I subsequently did, that I strenuously advised him to pursue his love affair to the end. It was the advice he wanted me to give and he accepted it, as all who knew his wife afterwards must confess, to his own great advantage.’

In March 1854 George was in deadly earnest. He had made up his mind, and he never wavered. All his father could do was to obtain a postponement and refuse to make the necessary pecuniary arrangements for the marriage till a long course of years should prove the steadfastness and constancy of the two parties to what he thought a somewhat reckless engagement. The letters of March 1854 show, however, that there was no sort of estrangement between father and son. By mutual agreement a resolution was come to never to allude to this painful topic, but at the best this cannot but have had a depressing effect upon the hitherto unreserved intimacy of their relations. If George was to make business his first object, then ‘Your aim,’ writes his father, ‘must be to become a great merchant—a little one is but a poor beast.’ Ambition, he goes on to say, very characteristically, is a good thing, and in no way

'militates against thoughts on eternity. It is one of the motives planted in the human breast on purpose to work out what is beneficial. I feel sure that Luther was not without some ambition, nor was Gustavus Adolphus, nor any of the men who have done most for mankind. Without ambition you will do nothing in the world; an inordinate degree which absorbs your mind entirely is quite a different thing.'

All of which may have recalled to the mind of a son who had inherited his father's determination to succeed the oft-quoted line that 'Ambition is no cure for love.' He perhaps reflected also that the precedents of Luther and Gustavus cited by the descendant of the old Lutheran ministers by no means proved that it was necessary to abandon either the one or the other.

In October Mr. Göschen took his son to Southampton to see him off on his voyage, via the West Indies, to South America, where, for a couple of years, he attended to the business of the firm in the almost equatorial regions of New Granada, now part of the United States of Colombia. Bogota, the capital, seems to have been gay enough, after its own fashion, but the greater part of George's life was spent amidst more primitive surroundings. His duty caused him to visit at intervals very distant parts of the state. His house—his 'New Granadian home,' as his family called it—was at Ambalema, where he lived in a little dwelling roofed with palm leaves, through which he could see the stars. Within the distance of a very few miles every variety of climate was to be found, from the Alpine weather and vegetation of the high mountain land, through the temperate regions, to the tropical country of the plains. His journeys when away from the river Magdalena were made on horseback, or on mules where the country was more than

usually difficult, and many an adventurous and dangerous ride he had. He boasts in his letters of the skill he has acquired in saddling and looking after his horses, and the increased comfort in life when once experience had taught him to enjoy a night's rest in the (at first) unfamiliar hammock. Whilst the heat of the low country knocked up men apparently far stronger than himself, the climate and the life seem to have added vigour to young Goschen's constitution. The affairs of the firm required his closest application and the constant transmission to his father of elaborate business dispatches; but he found time to correspond with his family on home topics, and with his friends Bright, Godfrey Lushington, Beck, Pearson, Fryer and Longe on political and other matters of general interest.

'Do not think,' he writes to his mother, 'that this is a very dull and disagreeable place. It is very peculiar and strange, but it is certainly not a solitude.'

There had been various 'parties and dances which make one die,' and he is much amused by many of the customs, especially the invariable practice of the country in 'demanding advances.'

'You give the washerwoman an advance to buy soap, starch and charcoal. If you employ a carpenter you either buy tools yourself or give him an advance to buy them; but advancing for starch pleases me best.'

Still, his letters, after a year's exile, show a longing to return to his own country. It was, in truth, a strange life for the Oxford Double First, for whom his fellows had predicted a brilliant public career, and without any near termination to it in view.

'Besides longing to be amongst you all again,' he writes to his mother, 'I am likewise longing to return once more to

the great world, from this little world, and to live in the centre of those great events of which only the “press copy” now reaches me. But if I were to live in England now, and had been all this time, I should have been very mad. How can we live calmly now? Good Heavens! all seem to be making the greatest fools of themselves from Lord John to Charles Dickens. All at cross purposes, all provokingly exaggerated, all running into extremes. Oh! confound them all, they make me sick of reading the papers. No! I prefer reading the books you sent me. “Westward Ho” is exquisite, truly beautiful with such a fine heroic spirit and deep earnest views. It is interesting too from the scene lying partly in these countries, and many of the names being quite familiar to me.’

Whatever hopes Mr. Göschen may have indulged that absence, ample occupation and ambitious dreams would drive out of his son’s mind the intention of an early and, as he thought it, an imprudent marriage, were very soon disappointed. And his father’s frank recognition of the inevitableness of the marriage, and his withdrawal of anything like complaint against his son’s fixity of purpose, followed the latter to South America a very few months after George’s departure thither. As the French epigram has it :

‘ L’absence est à l’amour  
Ce qu’est au feu le vent,  
Il éteint le petit  
Et augmente le grand.’

George Goschen never had cause to regret his early attachment, and his constancy in spite of every difficulty, to Miss Lucy Dalley. In 1856 he returned to England. The marriage took place in the following year, when he was twenty-six, and no husband and wife were ever better suited. Throughout his strenuous life she was able to

render him the greatest assistance in various ways, to share his interests, to play her own by no means unimportant part in the high positions they were destined to fill, and to give her husband for more than forty years one of the happiest of homes.



## CHAPTER II

### MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MINISTER

GEORGE GOSCHEN'S energies in London were now devoted to the pursuits of a business career—to ensuring and increasing the prosperity of the firm of Frühling and Göschen, which his father's ability and life-long industry had placed in the front rank of City houses. Though Mr. Göschen had not laid aside his ambitious hopes of a political career for his eldest son, his own increasing years made him more conscious than heretofore of the excessive strain on his own health caused by increasing labour and ever-present anxiety. His temperament was more cautious, or at least less sanguine, than his son's, as is very evident in the business correspondence that passed between them when George was in New Granada. Even then his mother's letters show how anxious she was for his speedy return from South America that he might share and lighten those heavy responsibilities which were wearing down his father's strength. In one characteristic George closely resembled his father. He never did anything by halves. He remained, as always, interested in public affairs; but, nevertheless, he bent himself whole-heartedly for the next few years to the work which he had in hand, becoming a great merchant, and by his abilities and character increasing steadily the prosperity and high standing of the firm, as well as winning for

himself the highest of reputations amongst commercial men. At the early age of twenty-seven he was made a director of the Bank of England, and in City circles he came to be known as the 'Fortunate Youth.'

In 1861 the publication of 'The Theory of the Foreign Exchanges' gave Goschen at once a far wider fame. In the modest introduction to this treatise, which was to run in a very few years through many editions and to be translated into several languages, he declared his intention to lay down no dogmatic theories,

'but rather to call attention to many facts which are commonly believed to be peculiarly complicated and unintelligible, which, however, if carefully analysed and illustrated may be presented in a simple form, and under an aspect to command general assent.'

Even amongst leading bankers and merchants he found, he said, men less conversant with the subject than its importance demanded. He hoped to interest the theorist and the economist; but not less 'those whose ample practical acquaintance with the Foreign Exchanges' was unaccompanied by any systematic or clearly thought out 'conclusions from the facts which they had observed.' Writing with complete grasp of his subject, with great clearness of exposition, and in no controversial spirit, the author quickly aroused the earnest attention of eminent business men and of financial authorities all over the world, and thus fully realised his hope that the

'treatise would contribute towards producing a better and clearer understanding of many principles, the true appreciation of which is absolutely indispensable for the formation of just and comprehensive views as to the laws which govern our money markets and our foreign commerce.'

It was a political and not a commercial career which had formed the subject of his youthful dreams. It was political eminence and fame as a statesman for which school and college friends had thought him predestined. Yet his start in political life, when it did come, came to him almost as a surprise. He had not sought out the 'Party Whips'; he had wooed no constituency. The House of Commons in 1863 was already four years old when Mr. Western Wood, member for the City of London, died, and George Goschen was invited to become his successor.

'I owed my introduction to political life,' wrote Lord Goschen some forty years afterwards, 'to two of my colleagues at the Bank of England, my old faithful friends, Robert Crawford and Kirkman Hodgson, splendid specimens of the British Merchant, cultivated, versed in all the higher questions both of commercial and banking finance, and wielding an exceptional influence in the City. Crawford was himself a Member for the City, in conjunction with Baron Lionel Rothschild and Alderman William Lawrence. At this distance of time I can still vividly recall my unbounded astonishment when my two friends came to my Office with the suggestion that I should stand for the City of London. Though from early days Westminster had been the goal of my hopes, I had never dreamt that the opening would come so soon, or in so brilliant a form. My candidature was submitted with those of two other men at a representative meeting of Liberals held at the London Tavern. One of the names put forward was that of Benjamin Phillips, a very influential Alderman, afterwards one of the best and most eloquent of Lord Mayors. I specially remember the scene on account of a horrible mistake into which I fell. When the name of Mr. Phillips came up for discussion, I asked the man who was sitting beside me, "Who is this Phillips?" "I am Alderman Phillips," was the crushing reply; not an auspicious beginning for the young aspirant on the eve of an

electoral adventure, which would bring him into contact with the great dignitaries of the City Corporation.'

At that time the City of London was pronouncedly Liberal. At the General Election of 1857 five candidates, all Liberal, had gone to the poll, and at the following one in 1859 all four members belonging to that Party were elected without any opposition at all. The last contest was at a bye-election in 1861. Then Mr. William Cubitt, though defeated by Mr. Western Wood, had at least been able to prove at the poll that the Conservatives, though a minority, formed a substantial and solid portion of the electorate. They had, it was clear, whenever a contest arose between Liberals, the power of ensuring that the moderate should prevail over the radical type. Lord Palmerston's *régime* was viewed with complacency by many moderate Conservatives. Hence, in the case of a bye-election, such as had now occurred, with a General Election in prospect at no distant date, it is not surprising that Party tactics should have induced the Conservatives of the City to refrain from entering the lists. Still, there was a good deal of grumbling and dissatisfaction with the inaction of the Party amongst the more militant Tories: letters were written to the papers, and an attempt was made to fan up opposition on the ground that the City wanted to be represented by an Englishman in thought and *in name*. When it is remembered that the candidate still spelt his name Göschen, and that his firm's designation—Frühling and Göschen—had about it a strong German flavour, it can hardly be matter of surprise that electioneers of a certain type should have sought to make capital amongst the more ignorant electors by exploiting a patriotic instinct in order to gain a Party advantage. Young Goschen's committee met this attempt by the issue of an address expressing the hope

‘that the City, whose political and social institutions open the highest honours and most substantial rewards to all who prove themselves worthy, and are able to achieve them, and have borne aloft to the very pinnacle of the social fabric the (foreign) names of Rothschild, Baring, Lefevre, Disraeli, Ricardo, will not be drawn away from the support of a candidate *merely* because he derives his name from the country of the lately deceased Prince Consort.’

Those were days of great anxiety to the candidate and his friends; little wonder that his wife, writing after the event, declared that had a candidate appeared at the last moment, she and her husband could hardly have borne it.

His father, at the time at Carlsbad undergoing a cure, was agitated almost more than his health could stand by the exciting news daily sent him from home. He was intensely proud of his son, and ambitious for him in his new career, but at the same time he realised very fully the risks that attended it. He would have preferred it had the offer of a seat come to George a twelvemonth later, and his hope had been that he might enter the House of Commons without a contest as a member for a moderate-sized borough. He was far from sanguine of victory, and hence his triumph and delight were the greater when on June 1 the telegraph announced that his son had been returned unopposed, and was now member for that famous City of London which but a short time before had been represented by such men as Lord John Russell and the historian Grote. He could hardly believe ‘in so stupendous a distinction and advancement both for his son and for himself.’

‘My father,’ wrote Lord Goschen, ‘was on occasions emotional like my grandfather, the publisher. It must be remembered that at that time the main weight of the

firm's business rested on my shoulders. My brother Charles, destined very soon after to be the head of the firm, was then only twenty-four years old. My father foresaw that in my case Westminster would overshadow the City, and he feared that his own responsibilities as a partner, of which he desired to be rid as soon as possible, would be postponed, if my attention were divided between business and politics ; but his heart was with the ambitions of his son. To him, politics meant something serious, duties not lightly to be undertaken—no mere party game. No one felt more deeply than he the import of the great political problems both at home and abroad. In this spirit he wrote to me as follows :

“ “ I wish you joy from my very heart. Really, in some respects this election is the very end of all my endeavours and aspirations ; for up to this mark, I may say that part of your success has had its origin in those things which I have been able to perform ; for instance, your position in society and in the commercial world. Henceforth you will owe every further success to yourself alone as far as public life is concerned, and may God grant that you may succeed to your heart’s content.

“ “ This is such an epoch in your life as may well be dwelt upon as most momentous. Politics have been adopted by you as an occupation for life. You have taken for ever your political side, published your sentiments to the world, and more especially to your electors. Henceforth you have to act up to such declarations, and they are unusually precise and extensive, and advanced in a certain direction. I dare say less would not have been done in the City, but pardon me for saying that I am sorry you were obliged to confess your convictions, whatever they are, so fully ; for it must be very hard if political convictions and sentiments should remain perfectly unaltered and unmodified, whilst so many other no less important convictions and sentiments suffer great modification as we grow older, and with this view it is confoundedly hard to be compelled to declare at the

age of thirty-two what one thinks, and is clearly convinced of, by which one is held for a lifetime. . . . Another matter which has occupied my mind nearly from the beginning is this. This Parliament will not live much longer. At the next General Election you must desire, strive hard to the utmost, to be re-elected. You will wish to prove that you are worthy to be re-elected, which probably, you will think, cannot be achieved by mere voting. Will it be wise and judicious for a new young member immediately to speak? Upon a subject such as finance and trade—well, that might perhaps be, and did you sit for a smaller constituency, I should still contend, better wait. You know best and you have experienced friends and advisers who are of your *métier*. As an outsider, but immensely interested in your welfare, I cannot help feeling nervous. I may be compared to an old hen, fluttering about on the margin of the pond upon which her ducklings are swimming.”

And he proceeds very unselfishly to advise his son to lighten the burden that business must impose on his time and activities, so that, above all things, he may keep his head cool for his new duties, without, however, becoming entirely estranged from the larger transactions of the firm. Henceforward it is clear that in his father’s mind politics, not business, would be the chief end and occupation of his son’s life, and whatever may have been the inconvenience to himself, or his fears for the future, he accepted the inevitable, and most warmly entered into all his son’s hopes and ambitions.

The election address, upon which his father had commented—the first formal statement of his political opinions submitted by George Goschen to a British electorate—was, in his own judgment in later years, somewhat ‘rhetorical and academical.’ The views expressed were considered in those days rather ‘advanced.’ He

entered the House of Commons pledged to Parliamentary Reform, the Ballot, the abolition of Church rates, and the removal of religious disabilities. He declared that local self-government was an essential element of national liberty ; but (as was to be expected from a candidate for the City) he strongly disapproved the late attempt to invade the municipal rights of that great Corporation as being highly injudicious in itself, and altogether inconsistent with the true policy of a Liberal Administration.

Two days after all was happily over, and George had taken his seat in the House of Commons on the right hand of the Speaker, his wife writes to her sister-in-law, Henrietta, her regrets that at such a stirring time she and Mr. Göschen should have been compulsorily detained abroad. The election address, she had heard, had been much praised by members in the House, and at the Reform Club it was declared to have been the best written for many a long day. She hardly knows how to express her intense gratification at the high honour of the position, and the good opinions her husband had won. Friends and opponents all assured her that *now* he was in his right position. She was already entering, she says, upon the duties of a private secretary, and 'George was bringing her home a bundle of letters every day, which gives two or three hours' work at a time.' He is intensely busy ; but 'we were both made for work. I delight in it, and if we have both health and strength all will go well. Calm and quiet days are behind, not before us, but these are the years to work ; later on will be the rest.' Then follows an account of the nomination—not the tame affair that it is to-day—and of George's speech to the great public gathering in the Guildhall. 'He looked so very young amidst such old grey heads' ; yet all nervousness

disappeared 'as soon as he stepped in the pulpit and began to speak. . . . To-morrow he dines with the Home Secretary to keep the Queen's birthday.' And so began his first session.

On July 28 Parliament was prorogued, and early in the autumn Goschen was able to pay a flying visit to his father in Saxony. In November he went to St. Petersburg on the business of the firm. The time was not, perhaps, very propitious for such a visit, as the Russian public was incensed at the sympathetic attitude of the British Government and people towards the insurgent Poles, and Lord Palmerston, at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, had just used some very strong language in reference to the barbarity of the Russian methods of suppression. Nevertheless, the young Member of Parliament was very well received: Ministers and others were most civil, and under the auspices of Lord Napier, the British Ambassador, he passed a most agreeable time.

'This fascinating diplomatist was extremely popular in St. Petersburg and it was a great pleasure to be taken by him to some of the houses where he visited. Amongst others, I remember that of Madame Stieglitz, widow, if I remember rightly, of the great Russian banker, who received her friends regularly after midnight. Lord Napier was one of her most frequent and welcome guests and would often stay till 3 o'clock in the morning, when he would return to the Embassy and despatch business with unhappy secretaries before he went to bed.'

With the Minister of Finance, de Reutern, an honest but not brilliant man, Goschen had much talk.

'He found him engaged in a hopeless attempt to raise the value of the Russian rouble. Time after time success

seemed near, but the cup was always dashed from his lips. No banking operations, no financial strategy could overcome the inherent difficulty of the situation created by the relentless natural laws which in certain conditions decree the depreciation of the currency.'

In general society Goschen found it expedient to remain silent when conversation turned, as it often did, on the Polish question. General Mouravieff, on whom was bestowed the sobriquet of the 'Polish Butcher,' had completed his bloody work in suppressing the insurrection in Lithuania, but the fierce passions which had been kindled had not subsided, and the sympathy which the British people and Government had shown for the Poles, and our reprobation of the Warsaw cruelties, were not calculated to produce much cordiality in St. Petersburg, and still less in Moscow, towards a British visitor. On the whole, considering the great tension of feeling at the time, Russian society behaved very well to the young Englishman. Only once was there a lapse from the general good breeding and consideration which had otherwise marked it.

'While at Moscow I was invited to dinner by the celebrated editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, M. Katkoff, almost the central figure of the party most violent against the Poles. I sat next a lady at dinner, who from the beginning to the end poured out a torrent of invective against the Poles, accusing them of the most barbarous excesses, indeed as fiends in human form. I sat in silence, the only course I could adopt in such a company; but even my silence was considered offensive. "Here is a gentleman," the lady exclaimed, "who sympathises with the Poles." The position was not agreeable, but it was the only occasion during my stay in Russia which was made uncomfortable to me by the existence of political passion.'

It was at Moscow that Goschen, whilst watching on a wintry day the exercises of the fire brigade, contracted a severe cold, which, on his return to St. Petersburg, was found to have affected his lungs.

‘Terrified at the idea of being laid up there, I started home, travelling three days and three nights on end, and arriving (unknown to myself) in a state of high fever. I had promised the Russian Minister of Finance to telegraph to him the day after my arrival with regard to some point of business on which we had been engaged. When I woke up, as I thought the day after I reached my home, my first impulse was to hasten to the City to send my telegram, when I was informed by my wife that I had been unconscious or delirious for twenty-four hours or more.’

This was the beginning of a serious illness which lasted many weeks—‘the only critical illness,’ Mr. Goschen used to say in his old age, ‘from which he had suffered during his long life.’ With the turn of the year his health and strength returned, so that he was again able to attend to business, and when Parliament met in February he was once more in full possession of all his powers, for the exercise of which the immediate occasion now imperatively called.

When George Goschen took his seat in the House of Commons as a supporter of the Government, Lord Palmerston’s Second Administration had been four years in power. In the summer of 1859 the disturbed condition of Party politics, caused on the Tory side by the fierce dissension which had raged since 1846 between Free Traders and Protectionists, and on the Whig side by disunion between different sections of Liberals, and the rival claims of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston to the Party leadership, had at last come to an end. Early in

1858 Lord John's opposition to the Conspiracy Bill, which he and a majority of the House of Commons regarded as a surrender to foreign dictation and a humiliating sacrifice of national dignity, had brought about the fall of Lord Palmerston, who had been replaced in power in 1857 as a result of his appeal to the country on the China War. The Peelites, however, refusing on Lord Palmerston's fall to throw in their lot with Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, the Derby Government was necessarily very weak in *personnel*; and in a House of Commons elected to support Lord Palmerston, it had, of course, no Party majority to fall back upon. Hence it was evident that the Tory Ministry would last only so long as the differences amongst the Opposition prevented them from coalescing. In March 1859 Lord John's motion to reject Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill, which, since it did not lower the borough franchise, was entirely opposed to Liberal sentiment, roused the enthusiasm and rallied all sections of that Party. The rejection was carried by a majority of thirty-nine. Lord Derby at once appealed to the country, which responded by returning to the House of Commons a slightly increased number of Conservatives, who would, however, still remain in a minority if only all sections of the Opposition could be brought to unite heartily against them.

The need for Liberal union was therefore imperative. Lord John and Lord Palmerston agreed that no difference between them as to personal precedence should prevent it. In short, that should either of the two be summoned by the Queen to form a Ministry, the other would accept the second place in it. Accordingly, in their joint names, a meeting of the whole Party was summoned at Willis's Rooms the day before the meeting of the new Parliament. It was addressed both by Lord John and Lord Palmerston, and

by men of such different shades of Liberalism as Mr. Bright, Mr. Sidney Herbert and Mr. Horsman, and the utmost unanimity and heartiness prevailed. On the debate on the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech, Lord Hartington moved, on behalf of a united Party, an amendment of no confidence in the Ministry—declaring that 'it is essential that your Majesty's Government should possess the confidence of the House of Commons and the country, and respectfully submitting that such confidence is not reposed in the present advisers of your Majesty.' The Whigs led by Russell and Palmerston, the Peelites by Sir James Graham and Sidney Herbert, the Radicals by Cobden and Bright, went into the Lobby together, and in a House of almost unprecedented size defeated the Government by a majority of thirteen. Not a majority, one would have supposed, on which to build a durable Administration! The Queen sent for Lord Palmerston, Lord John took office under him as Foreign Secretary, the Peelites finally threw in their lot with the Liberals, and the new Ministry retained the confidence of Parliament and the country till the death of its chief, more than six years afterwards.

There was, however, one Peelite, and he the most distinguished of the whole band, who at that time seemed to be tending distinctly towards union with Lord Derby and the Tories, whilst Graham, Sidney Herbert, Cardwell and the rest were clearly drawing nearer and nearer to the Whigs. Mr. Gladstone had voted in March for Lord Derby and the Tories when the Liberal amendment to the Tory Reform Bill placed that statesman in a minority and compelled a dissolution. He voted with Lord Derby again against Lord Hartington's vote of no confidence on June 11, which brought Lord Palmerston into power, and there was therefore not a little surprise when a week later

it was announced that Mr. Gladstone had accepted the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Palmerston. As Lord Morley puts it, this caused no strain on his political principles, though it was a severe wrench to Party feelings. The decision was of momentous importance to his own future career, and to the Party which he had now finally joined. When, four years later (in 1863), George Goschen became member for the City of London, Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, Lord Russell, the Foreign Secretary, who had just gone to the House of Lords, and Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, were the three statesmen in the Cabinet who counted. But the parts of the first two were already almost played out, whilst the star of Mr. Gladstone was rising. There is little room for surprise that for many years men hardly knew what to make of Mr. Gladstone. His hesitations and vacillations had excited the distrust of strong partisans, and even to plain and moderate men the reasoning which convinced himself, and on which he professed to base his actions and justify his conduct, often seemed in the highest degree sophistical. At last, however, in charge of the Exchequer and in a Liberal Government Mr. Gladstone's wonderful powers of finance and his vehement and ever-growing popular sympathies found free scope. Six years under Lord Palmerston, followed by six months' leadership of the House of Commons in Lord Russell's reforming Administration, sufficed to raise him to a position of ascendancy over his countrymen which few English statesmen have ever attained.

After the General Election of 1859, the thoughts of Englishmen were for a long time occupied less with their own domestic affairs than with the great events that were happening abroad. The war in the north of Italy between

France and Sardinia in alliance against Austria, the Civil War in America and the consequent distress caused by the cotton famine in Lancashire, the Russian suppression of the Polish insurrection in 1862, had deeply stirred men's feelings. More recently, the strained relations between Denmark and the German Powers had been causing much excitement and anxious foreboding. Lord Russell at the Foreign Office, heartily backed by Lord Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone, gave sympathy and encouragement to the cause of Italian independence. A policy of absolute neutrality in accordance with the rules of international law was the line which the Government had rightly marked out for itself during the great American conflict. In spite of many difficulties and much temptation this neutrality was maintained. 'Almost a phenomenon in political history,' was the verdict of the Radical Mr. Grote. 'No such forbearance has been shown during the history of the two last centuries.' On the continent of Europe the popular sympathies of the British Ministers, and on the part of Lord Russell a certain brusqueness of tone and a tendency to lecture the Foreign Offices of other nations, gave a good deal of offence, if not to those nations themselves, at least to the Courts and Governments that represented them.

It was June when Goschen's election for the City took place, and the Session of 1863 was already more than half over. The House of Commons and the country were giving their attention almost exclusively to foreign affairs. No Bills of first-rate importance were before Parliament, nor had any been announced in the Queen's Speech.

'The financial business had already been concluded and thus I missed the great feature of the Session—Mr. Gladstone's magnificent speech in defence of the taxation of

charities, one of the finest oratorical efforts of his whole career, and the echoes of which still vibrated in the atmosphere of the House of Commons many months after it had been delivered. Generally speaking party politics were singularly stagnant. Many Conservatives were quite content to keep Lord Palmerston in power, and though his nominal Parliamentary majority was small no efforts were made in the course of the Session to discredit him. . . . I did not entirely follow my father's prudent advice as to abstaining for some time from any intervention in the debates. I addressed the House several times during the remaining months of the Session. My position as member for the City made it natural for me to speak on several matters connected with commerce and shipping, amongst them on the law of Partnership. Limited Liability was feeling its way from stage to stage. The conversion of private firms into limited liability companies was laying rapid hold of the public and was a subject on which I found myself competent to take part in debate. I have been interested to find in re-reading my first deliverances that I already struck the note of that objection to the encroachments of Government interference on the freedom of individual action which, for good or for evil, has coloured to a certain extent my political opinions throughout my career. But I did not confine myself in that first year to my duties as a member for the City. I ventured on a bolder flight. Though as I have said stagnation reigned supreme in domestic politics there was a decided stir with reference to matters affecting religious equality and liberty. The repose of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge was disturbed by movements which daringly aimed at admitting dissenters within the sacred precincts; and in other directions too the privileges of the Church of England had to meet sundry challenges. My election address reflected my own interest in these questions. The fact of my not having taken my Master of Arts degree at Oxford, for which it was necessary to submit to certain tests, was supposed in some quarters to

have been the real stimulus of my activity in the cause of the abolition of tests in the Universities. But this was an entire error. I had not been able to take my M.A. degree because I had only passed the examination in one of the schools, whereas in those days it was necessary for a degree to pass both in the classical and mathematical school; and I left Oxford before passing the latter. My attitude towards the abolition of tests was simply due to my then convictions, which I shared with the whole circle of my old Oxford friends. In July, Mr. Dodson, member for East Sussex, called attention to a petition from Heads of Houses, professors, and present and former Fellows in the University of Oxford for the abolition of the requirement of subscription to *formularies of Faith* as a qualification for *Academical degrees.*'

It was on this subject that Goschen made his first important mark in Parliament.

The publication of 'Essays and Reviews,' and the prolonged controversy that followed, had raised to fever heat the temperature of theological discussion. Two generations have passed since those days, and it is difficult for the modern reader of that famous volume to understand the ferocity of discussion that it aroused. Low Church and High Church were equally vehement, Lord Shaftesbury declaring that 'if the book were true, the Bible was false,' and Archdeacon Denison pronouncing that 'of all books in any language it was incomparably the worst.' In the eyes of many excellent, if not wise, people Goschen was endeavouring to deal a severe blow not only against the Church, but against the cause of religion itself. Hence the battle of the Tests raged fiercely during the Sessions of 1863, 1864, and 1865. Goschen opposed tests altogether, on principle. The subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles and the acceptance of the thirty-sixth canon, which required

assent to the whole of the Book of Common Prayer, were at that time necessary conditions to the obtaining of a Master of Arts degree at Oxford. During these three Sessions the question of principle was raised in various forms by Mr. Dodson, Mr. Bouverie, Mr. Buxton and others. Opinions in the House were closely divided, and Mr. Gladstone's strong and narrow Churchmanship, and the fact that he represented the M.A.'s of Oxford, had a decidedly weakening effect on the support which the Government was able to give to the reformers. In his very first Session Goschen spoke on the subject with much spirit. When it was urged that the admission of Dissenters would 'destroy the repose' essential to the welfare of Oxford, he replied that there was more need of intellectual life and energy in our Universities than of repose, and that, as a matter of fact, tests had assuredly *not* secured Oxford from religious strife. Yet he spoke always with emphasis of his affection for, and loyalty to, the Church of England; as Mr. Gladstone, whilst himself taking a very different position on the question, freely recognised. In Goschen's belief, the measure he was advocating would benefit both the Church and the Universities, a view which roused the wrath of Lord Robert Cecil,<sup>1</sup> then the chief exponent of the high Tory doctrines held by the majority at Oxford; where, nevertheless, the Commissioners who had inquired into the subject had reported in favour of abolition, and where many of the most distinguished men in the University were the keenest advocates of the reform.

Lord Robert declared that 'to abolish tests, would be to abolish the Universities altogether.' To admit Dissenters would be to admit to the Universities those who were aliens to the Church. They might as well admit to Parliament aliens who owed no allegiance—views which, as Mr. Grant

<sup>1</sup> The late Lord Salisbury.

Duff<sup>1</sup> declared in the debate, 'seemed odd to a Scotchman.' In the following Session (1864) the subject was brought before the House in a Bill introduced by Mr. Dodson,<sup>2</sup> and backed by Mr. Grant Duff and Mr. Goschen, who once more found their keenest opponent in Lord Robert Cecil. Charged by Goschen with exaggerated language on this subject at an Oxford banquet on the previous day, Lord Robert repeated in debate his whole-hearted detestation of the Bill, and of the motives of its promoters. 'I lay down in the most formal manner that I cannot think a man a good Churchman, who is not also a good Conservative.' Goschen put the whole matter in a nutshell when he asked in reply, 'Were the Universities to be clerical seminaries, or Universities for the education of youth in the true sense of the word?' And the House, by a majority of only ten (236 to 226), went into Committee on the Bill.

On July 1 the Bill stood for third reading. Sir William Heathcote opposed it in a short speech. Somewhat unexpectedly, when he sat down, the debate collapsed. The division therefore was taken much earlier than was expected, and the word 'now' in the motion that the Bill be now read a third time was carried by ten (150 to 140). Lord Robert, on re-entering the House after the division, was at once on his feet complaining that a mine had been sprung upon his friends, who had not had time given them to muster in force. The main question was then put, 'That the Bill be now read a third time.' (Ayes 170. Noes also 170.) Dodson and Goschen again told for the Ayes, whilst Sir William Heathcote and Sir Stafford Northcote told for the Noes. The Speaker declared that, taking into account what had

<sup>1</sup> The late Rt. Honble. Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff, Governor of Madras.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Lord Monk Bretton.

happened, he would, in order to give the House another opportunity of deciding the question for itself, give his casting vote to the Ayes, and thereupon put the final question, 'That this Bill do pass.' (Ayes 171. Noes 173.) The Bill was therefore lost, and the temporary triumph of Lord Robert and the forces of reaction was a great one. In every division Gladstone voted against the Bill. On all sides it was acknowledged that Goschen had shown conspicuous ability, and was evidently a member with whom in the future the House would have to reckon.

Once more, in 1865, the Bill, this time under the charge of Mr. Goschen and Mr. Grant Duff, made its appearance. Goschen's speech, on moving the second reading, was afterwards published and circulated. Once more Lord Robert Cecil moved its rejection; but this time the second reading was carried by sixteen. (Ayes 206. Noes 190.) A barren victory! for it was already the middle of June, Parliament had reached the last weeks of its existence, and no further progress with it before the General Election was possible.

The considerable position Goschen had won for himself before Lord Palmerston's Parliament was dissolved was, however, by no means solely due to his efforts in reforming the Universities. He had been selected by Lord Palmerston at the opening of the Session of 1864 to second the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, a compliment to him and his constituency which he greatly appreciated, affording him an opportunity of which 'he at once determined to make the most.' The interview between the Leader of the House and the young member must have been an interesting one. Palmerston, in the reign of George III., had, as a Junior Lord of the Admiralty in the Duke of Portland's Administration, made his first speech in the

House of Commons on the subject of the British occupation of Copenhagen in 1807 and the seizure of the Danish fleet. Goschen was to make his last speech in Parliament (in the House of Lords) in the reign of George III.'s great grandson just a century later—a wonderful century in British history.

' My interview with the veteran statesman remains fixed in my memory as one of the most memorable incidents of my career, and his observations to me on that occasion have an historical interest as illustrating his state of mind at that time, and his attitude towards reforms and domestic legislation. The old man's manner to me was one of extraordinary cordiality, and full of life. Instructing me as to the topics to be dealt with in the speech, he ran through the various points of foreign policy that required to be touched. They were sufficiently numerous and important. When he came to a stop as if he had finished his instructions, I asked him with becoming diffidence, " What is to be said about domestic affairs and legislation ? " " Oh," he gaily replied, rubbing his hands with an air of comfortable satisfaction, " there is really nothing to be done. We cannot go on adding to the Statute Book *ad infinitum*. Perhaps we may have a little law reform, or bankruptcy reform; but we cannot go on legislating for ever." Be it remembered this was in 1864. There were looming on the horizon some of the greatest problems which have ever been submitted to Parliament—Parliamentary reform, the ballot, education, far-reaching measures affecting the Church. In fact, a new legislative era was before long to set in, but to the eyes of the cheerful octogenarian, the Statute Book was full enough. However, I somewhat audaciously determined that I would not give the go by in my speech to the internal situation. I would show sympathetically if possible, that in my eyes domestic affairs bore some large proportion to foreign policy, and I took infinite pains to make a creditable appearance. My speech was highly prepared; it was a bold throw for

success; if I had failed, I should have been held to be presumptuous and possibly ridiculous, but I did not fail. Writing, as I am, forty years after this time, I may be pardoned for recording that I was extremely successful. The position was all the more full of risk since I felt that in the extreme uncertainty and the critical state of foreign affairs at that moment, not only the House, but even Europe was waiting with much impatience the utterance of the great Parliamentary Leaders.'

The moment was, indeed, an anxious one. The *Times* of the following morning (February 5, 1864), in its leading article, highly praised the tone and temper of the debate in which 'the House of Commons showed itself well worthy of its reputation as the first deliberative assembly in the world.' In spite of events the most exciting, though 'the House was deliberating almost within hearing of those cannon, . . . which are beating down the defences of a small and valiant nation,' it preserved 'the most judicial calmness and tranquillity'; and the great paper went on, after commenting upon the speeches of Lord Palmerston and Mr. Disraeli, to notice that of Mr. Goschen as containing 'germs of unusual promise. The language was correct and pointed, and the thoughts followed each other with an ease and force which might excite the envy of the most experienced debater; whilst his view of the case was more judicial than that of the Opposition Leader.'

To return to Mr. Goschen's own account of his speech. He was desirous from the very first of emphasising and making clear the general direction and tendency of his political principles and sympathies in certain important respects. He had, of course, to follow the general line of policy sketched to him by Lord Palmerston. But with regard to two matters:

‘I was anxious,’ he writes, ‘to give special colour to my remarks. The Manchester School with its strong inclination to non-intervention, and its too absolute devotion in my judgment, to peace at any price, seemed disposed to give the impression that its doctrines were those of the great Liberal Party. They were the “Little Englanders,” if I may say so, of that period. On the other hand, there were a group of academical Liberals and others who would in these days be called “Jingoes” or “Imperialists.” I wished clearly to establish this fact. On the other hand the attitude of some of the extreme Radicals towards the upper classes and their alleged indictment against the latter for their indifference to the poor, had jarred upon me, and in this respect, too, I thought it right to show that one wing of the Liberal party repudiated such attitude. Though the seconding of an Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne by a young Member of Parliament of less than one year’s standing may appear an unimportant matter, I deal with it at some length, as practically it gives the key of my general attitude both towards foreign and domestic questions during my whole political career.

‘The country was in a very delicate position as regards the Schleswig-Holstein question. Lord Palmerston had laid down that Denmark in certain eventualities “would not stand alone.” On the other hand, now when battles had already been fought in the Duchies, and a great crisis seemed imminent, timid counsels began to course through the country, and much language was held very incompatible with the Prime Minister’s attitude.

‘“There can be,” I said, “but one opinion as to the object of the policy which Her Majesty’s Government are pursuing with regard to the Schleswig-Holstein question. That end is peace; but unanimous, as we may be, with regard to the end in view, there may still be differences of opinion in the Nation, as to the means by which that end can best be secured. That does not seem to me to be necessarily a warlike policy, which contemplates the possibility of strong

measures for the coercion of disturbers of the peace; or that necessarily a peaceful policy which by laying down beforehand the doctrine of absolute non-intervention, almost holds out a temptation to aggression. The House will doubtless rejoice with me that the Speech from the Throne, although breathing an ardent aspiration for peace, does not by any premature declaration surrender the Country's choice as to the course it may be ultimately our interest or our duty to pursue. At the present moment, as on the eve of all Continental struggles, the idea uppermost in every mind is, whether England is likely to be drawn into the struggle. The Country is divided between the modern policy of non-intervention and its traditional pride of influence and regard to international obligations; it appears to debate with some uneasiness, into which scale on this particular question it should throw its weight, and I believe it has not made up its mind that the doctrine of non-intervention can be of universal and absolute application, if it means that the Government should stand aloof, whatever principles are at stake, whatever interests are involved, or whatever the issues impending. The Country cannot comprehend how, whilst the barriers separating different nations are being thrown down every day by increasing intercourse, by the surrender of ancient prejudices, by treaties of commerce, and by the inculcation of the principles of universal benevolence, the first utterance of England on the approach of a European danger should be to proclaim an utterly selfish and isolated policy, repudiating not only her international obligations, but also, I may say, her international interests. It seems to me as impossible, as it would be inconsistent and impolitic, for England, in the face of Europe, to lay down a rule of absolute non-intervention. Those professing to desire peace at any price seem often unwilling to pay the heavy price which might be asked for it—and that is war itself.”

In Goschen's view no responsible Government of a great country could possibly declare in advance that under

no circumstances would it have recourse to measures stronger than diplomatic remonstrance, and he dreaded lest the cry raised in England for non-intervention should encourage German designs on the integrity of Denmark, and lessen the influence of Lord Palmerston's strong declaration.

The Queen's Speech did not promise any specific domestic legislation, and it expressed satisfaction with the commercial and financial condition of the country.

'At this time,' Lord Goschen continues in his autobiographical fragment, 'the noble bearing of Lancashire operatives during the existence of the terrible privations of the cotton famine was one of the finest features of British tenacity and calmness under suffering which history records. As it has been often urged, with reference to my political and social tendencies, that I showed little sympathy with the working classes, and little understanding of the problems of poverty and distress, I may be excused if I recall what I said in this speech, which, though it was only meant to be a formal seconding of the Address, was in reality an exposition of my political standpoint. "It should be remembered that our prosperity has been increased at a time of great commercial and industrial depression. But a few years ago it was believed that the whole prosperity of England depended on her cotton manufactories, and when at length the crisis came which some had foreseen, but none had forestalled, the enemies of England predicted that the bubble of her prosperity was burst, and even her friends believed that, though ultimately she was sure to recover, she would have to go through a long period of commercial depression, starvation, and discontent; but instead of depression our commerce has risen to magnificent development; the apprehended starvation has been mitigated by the splendid example of national liberality, and then by the energy and elasticity of our enterprise which replaced America by India; and as for the insurrection, the only cry

that has been heard from Manchester is that the Government should not attempt to depart from its neutrality towards America, and that it should not be tempted to let ships be launched, the object of which was to break the blockade which had brought famine to their doors.””

Goschen dilated on the changes in our trade caused by the American Civil War, during which ‘the precious metals expelled by the millions of greenbacks’ migrated from America at war to India at peace, or the transfer of freight from American to British shipping, and then, touching lightly on taxation and the elasticity of the consumption of commodities, concluded by pointing out that everything tended to confirm the sanguine view taken in the Queen’s Speech of the growing prosperity of the country. He felt bound, nevertheless, to enter a caveat in the following terms :

‘I do not wish to diminish the sense of satisfaction the House must feel at that prosperity, when I venture to express the earnest wish that side by side with that prosperity there should be a proportionate and parallel advance in the condition of our working classes and of that pauper population, to whom, living in almost historical misery, our annual congratulations on increasing prosperity may sometimes convey more of irony than of truth. It would be a natural and excusable error if those classes, judging from their own immediate condition, were somewhat sceptical as to the growth of a prosperity which scarcely seemed to grow to them. But if there be men who, having influence over the masses, instead of correcting this natural shortsightedness, and regardless of the honest efforts that are made by the rich to work off the legacy of the past, attribute to contemporary and personal intention that destitution which is rather due to an irresponsible past, they appear to me to be sacrificing possible improvement to plausible agitation, and statesmanship to sentiment. Rejecting, as I do, every theory of the

cause of English pauperism which attributes its origin to class legislation and its maintenance to class egotism, I, as a member of the great Liberal Party, and as a representative of a city the picture of whose splendid wealth is set in a frame of the darkest poverty, cannot overlook the question which is now attracting so much attention, the question of the condition of the working classes. I sincerely believe much has been attained. Cheaper bread, better education, and the beneficial policy of the Government have done much to show that the interests of no class of Englishmen are forgotten in our Parliament, even as it is. Still we must persist in that impartial legislation, and I hope the day will come when the doctrine of Free Trade, which has been applied with such signal success to Capital and Commerce, and from which such wonderful results have flowed, will be brought to bear upon other factors of our national prosperity—for instance, upon labour—when the restrictions which now impede the free circulation of Labour as well as of Land will be temperately reconsidered.'

Great as was the applause with which Goschen's speech was, on the whole, received, and full of promise as it was for his future career, there need be little surprise that in certain quarters it gave serious offence. Goschen had presented a copy of his 'Theory of the Foreign Exchanges' to Mr. Cobden, and the latter, in writing on February 6 to thank him, took him sharply to task for making 'reflections,' for, so he understood them, 'on the conduct of Mr. Bright and myself.'

'This I am told by a friend who was present was the interpretation put on it by the Opposition, who received it with loud cheers. This is not the first time that in your public utterances you have appeared to go out of your way to dissociate yourself from us and those who act with us—a course which has appeared to me the more uncalled for,

inasmuch as I am not aware that we ever sought your co-operation, or solicited you in any way to identify yourself with our views or proceedings. This course appears to me still further open to remark when I consider that—assuming you to be true to your professions at the hustings—in nine cases out of ten, you and I and Mr. Bright will be found voting, on divisions, in the same lobby. On all great issues we shall be contending against the same political party, and, looking at the powerful influence with which we have to contend, and the difficulty of effecting the reforms which we profess to advocate, there is surely sufficient employment for your energies without attacking your nearest allies. Since I have been in Parliament I have made it my invariable study to avoid a public collision with those with whom I generally find myself acting in concert. This is my reason for making this private communication to you. At the same time, to be frank, I am not, I fear, surcharged with meekness, and do not pledge myself not to reciprocate your next public repudiation. I need not say that Mr. Bright can deal a heavy return blow, and they who wantonly assail him, must have full faith in their powers.

‘Let me be clearly understood as not addressing a mere Whig, with whom I have politically little more in common than with Tories, but one whose profession of faith at the hustings embraced the chief tenets of radicalism.

‘I will add, as the result of my experience in the House that there is nothing more seductive to a new member than an eager hearing which a many-sided criticism is sure to command for him. Friends and opponents are equally on the *qui vive* not knowing where the censure may fall. But this in the long run leads to isolation in which no man can accomplish any important object, for he loses his influence when absorbing issues are at stake, and passes almost out of view at the decisive struggle of parties. Fire ships, which endanger friend and foe, are cast aside when the great contest takes place in close line of battle. I have in my mind’s eye two members of the House whose position

illustrates my meaning. With very superior Parliamentary powers, and a career of thirty years of public life, no one knows where to find them, and they will leave no trace of themselves as the prominent and successful advocates of any legislative measure. I make no apology for this frankness. It is the very least that you must have been preparing to expect.'

Goschen's reply was couched in language equally frank. Indeed, it was his earnest desire to prevent misconception as to his views that had forced him to be explicit in his speech.

' DEAR MR. COBDEN,

' I think I am right in supposing that your letter to me was dictated on the whole by a friendly spirit. Your advice about the danger of isolation and certain temptations which you describe as besetting new members seems to me to afford the key to your whole letter, which I therefore consider to be one Addressed by an old and experienced member of Parliament to an inexperienced novice. You must not think, however, that any words which I used in my speech on the Address were used hastily or inconsiderately to secure that "eager hearing" which you say is so seductive. I felt myself in a dilemma into which many Liberals have been put. They must either leave untouched many most important topics in which they are deeply interested, or if they touch them (without some such protest as I made) be considered to share those views which Mr. Bright has so often and so strongly expressed as to the motives and intentions of the governing classes, views which I must honestly confess appear to me most dangerous.

' You say that it is not for the first time that I have dissociated myself from yourself and your friends. The fact is that there is a very great difference between us on two points; on the foreign policy of the country, and on the language to be held with regard to the relations between different classes in this country. You argue, or seem to

argue, that my “professions” as you call them on the hustings established practical identity between my political creed and that of the party to which you belong. “I embraced,” you say, “the principal tenets of radicalism,” and you seem to indicate that the line I am taking is inconsistent with my professions. I hope that I am mistaken in this, but several expressions in your letter point to that conclusion. I stick both in the letter and in the spirit to every word I uttered at my election. In home politics we should generally, I believe, as you suggest, vote in the same lobby. But it seems to me that while we agree as to the end, we should differ exceedingly as to the means. Mr. Bright believes, if I am not mistaken, in a degree of selfishness on the part of the governing classes which in my humble opinion is a libel on them, and I feel so strongly on this point that even when we may both have the same object in view, I cannot work towards that end without declining my share in what I think a libel. It is the similarity of our views on so many points which would lead others infallibly to the conclusion that I shared the views of Mr. Bright as to the relations and feelings of different classes to each other, unless I made a protest. The fact that you seemed to think that from the identity of our views on many points I had so clearly associated myself with your party, that any criticism was rather treacherous, shows me that others probably might have believed also that we thought alike on all matters, and consequently that any allusion made to the working classes or to pauper populations without explanation would have been thought to have been made in the spirit of Mr. Bright’s views as to the position of the rich.

‘Thus I did not go out of my way, as you say, in making the allusion which you criticise so severely. On the contrary, it was the only way open to me out of the dilemma which I have endeavoured to point out to you. Do me the justice to believe that my political convictions are both warm and sincere, and that in your letter there is really a more severe attack upon me than any which I have made.

‘ Possibly I may be incorrect in my interpretation of Mr. Bright’s opinions, and I can assure you it would give me most sincere pleasure to find I was in error. Your own services to the country in so many respects have been so eminent that it would on most occasions be an honour to fight by your side. The frankness of your letter has demanded equal frankness from me and therefore I have not hesitated to be outspoken. In using the phrase “your party” I mean the same as you mean when you say “us and those who act with us.”’

‘ Yours faithfully,  
‘ GEORGE GOSCHEN.’

The young member of Parliament by no means disliked being drawn into correspondence with ‘the great Mr. Cobden,’ who replied as follows:—

‘ Midhurst,  
‘ 12th February 1864.

‘ DEAR MR. GOSCHEN,

‘ A word only in rejoinder to prevent misapprehension. When I spoke of your dissociating yourself from “us and those who act with us,” I had reference to the “Manchester School,” which you repudiated in your canvass, and not to any *political* party formed or forming. That name was given to the “League” party by Disraeli; and it never had any other than a Free Trade significance. What struck me in your election was the use of this sobriquet, while professing what I call radical doctrines. I had not met with such an incident before, but still I should not have referred to it, but for the opportunity which you again afforded me, and for the occasion which the acknowledgment of your book gave me. I never sought any political following. My object, my sole object I might almost say, in public life has been —by placing myself sternly outside of Whig and Tory circles—to secure for the public something better than the meagre programme of those aristocratic parties. I have

succeeded, and experience convinces me that another step in political progress can only be gained in the same way. We are becalmed for the moment, and the State Vessel has no head-way. But this state of things cannot last. There are as great issues awaiting solution at the hands of the rising generation of politicians in this country as have been settled in the present century. When the struggle comes, men will be too much engrossed in the fate of great principles to criticise those who deal the heaviest blows at the common enemy.

‘I am truly yours,

‘RICHARD COBDEN.’

Goschen, as has been seen, fully realised beforehand the risk that attaches to the young member who in his first, or almost his first, speech ventures to address the House of Commons in the tone of experienced statesmanship. In nine cases out of ten the House refuses to take such a pretentious orator quite as seriously as he takes himself, with the result that, before he sits down, the new member has acquired, with those he had hoped to impress, a reputation for self-importance not conducive to the rapid winning of the goodwill and earnest attention of that critical assembly. It was not so here. Lord Richard Grosvenor,<sup>1</sup> then only twenty-three, had moved the Address in ‘a cool, easy way.’ Goschen’s manner in seconding him was modest. He spoke with conviction. In the great world of business it was known that his distinguished ability had already made its mark. Above all, there was in the speech a note of individuality which the House was quick to realise. Disraeli, who, as Leader of the Opposition, followed Goschen, said that night to Sir John Hay, as they walked home together, that ‘it was the best speech he had heard in the House for

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards ‘Whip’ to the Liberal Party; now Lord Stalbridge.

many a long day—so much to the point.' And Mrs. Goschen, with delight, describes the scene she had witnessed from the Ladies' Gallery—how Palmerston, Gladstone, and Grey shook him heartily by the hand, how all 'except Nineveh Layard' were warm in their congratulation. Most highly appreciated compliment of all, Lady Palmerston had called in Park Lane and had invited them to her Saturday evening Assembly, an invitation, however, that it was impossible to accept, since the Goschens made it their practice to spend their Wednesdays and Saturdays at Eltham. All which news was faithfully transmitted by Mrs. Goschen to her husband's delighted father, in Saxony.

The speech on the Address, the ability he had shown in the controversy about University tests, and the knowledge he had brought to bear upon the discussion of commercial questions had quickly raised Goschen in the opinion of the House of Commons. It was clear enough that the time for new men and new measures was rapidly approaching, and highly probable that his own chance was coming. The Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament in 1865 was described by Lord Derby in the House of Lords as the message 'of an aged Minister to a moribund Parliament.' The Houses were prorogued in July, and at the General Election a Palmerstonian majority was returned. George Goschen was re-elected for the City of London, this time at the head of the poll. Lord Palmerston, however, died some months before the new Parliament met. Lord Russell succeeded him as Prime Minister, with Mr. Gladstone as before Chancellor of the Exchequer, but with the enormously increased authority that belongs to the Leader of the House of Commons. Lord Russell desired that his Administration should be 'distinctly Liberal,' and in November he invited

the young member for the City of London to enter it as Vice-President of the Board of Trade.<sup>1</sup> Promotion came rapidly, and when the new Leader (Mr. Gladstone) took his seat in February 1866, Goschen, who had seen but two and a half Sessions of Parliamentary life, sat beside him as a Privy Councillor, a Cabinet colleague, and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

His time as an independent member, short as it was, had been sufficient for him to win for himself in the ranks of the party a very definite individual position. On certain subjects he sympathised with advanced Liberals; yet, as we have seen, he was ready from the very first to cross swords with the Manchester School, whenever its leading members made it their object to advance their ends by embittering class against class and by stirring the animosity of the poor against the rich, or whenever their doctrines of 'peace at any price' seemed to him to involve the disregard of national duty or national honour. On such terms he held that peace ought not to be, and indeed could not be, preserved.

In several of his speeches the tendency to lean against Government interference in matters of trade and commerce, and indeed generally, wherever it could be avoided, was marked. In his third session, speaking on the second reading of the Bank Notes Issue Bill, he explained the distinction between *money* and *capital*.

'The circulating medium,' he said, 'was the only thing with which the Government had anything to do. It was

<sup>1</sup> In *Punch's* cartoon, the first of many in which Goschen was to figure, John Bright was portrayed as the 'Political Wallflower.' In the background the Prime Minister is leading to the dance the *débutante* 'Miss Göschen,' whom he asks 'to join our set,' whilst 'Miss Bright,' a lady of more mature years and the glummest of countenances, exclaims, 'Nobody asks *me*; and if they did I should certainly decline.'—*Punch*, November 25, 1865.

monstrous to suppose that the State was to supply capital. His honourable friend had talked of the numerous fluctuations in the rate of discount. His [Goschen's] wonder was that the fluctuations were not even greater than they had been. The fact was that the rate of discount depended solely on the demand for loanable capital. If the number of borrowers exceeded the number of lenders, the rate of interest rose; if it was less the rate fell. The fluctuations were not in the circulating medium, but in the value of loanable capital. It was a mistake to suppose that with that state of things the State had anything to do. . . . The principle of Free Trade was to give the greatest freedom to the means of supply. The Bank of England had no more power to control the rate of discount than any other establishment. If it asked too high a rate it would, of course, lose its business. What was being asked was that what was scarce should be made cheap. . . . If the Bank of England had no maximum limit of issue, did anyone suppose that money would always be at 4 per cent. or 5 per cent. ? '

After his entrance into the Ministry there was, of course, less opportunity for Goschen to display in the House of Commons his individuality of view. When he spoke henceforth, he spoke on behalf of his colleagues and not merely for himself, and his individual influence on the counsels of the nation was brought to bear from within, rather than by playing a vigorous part in the parliamentary arena. The career of the new Parliament, though short, was remarkable. After a few months Goschen was once more out of office and in opposition; and it was not until after another dissolution and General Election that his qualities as an administrator were really tested.

To many men the acceptance of office means an increase of private means as well as a step upwards in political

position. With Goschen this was not so, and neither he nor his father attempted to shut his eyes to the fact that the pursuit of a political career must entail on the younger man a large sacrifice of future wealth. That anyone could loyally serve two masters did not occur to either of them. George must be the servant either of the State *or* of Frühling and Göschen, and must devote to the services of whichever master he chose the whole of his energies :

After Lord Palmerston's death (October 18, 1865), whilst Lord Russell was forming his Ministry, Mr. Göschen had been naturally deeply interested in watching events. On November 6 he writes to his son from Saxony as to his future career :

'The thing becomes serious; no doubt about that; and I cannot help considering your letter as a feeler. Your last letter already expressed no confidence in the stability of a Russell-Gladstone Ministry. In this one, you confirm your opinion, and on this want of confidence I take my stand. Are you to make the enormous sacrifice of withdrawing from business, in other words, of a very large income, and be on the shelf perhaps, and according to your notion and convictions: probably, after some months. The idea is too shocking, but you must be prepared for great difficulties. Not only will you have to resist the temptation of your own inclination to enter the Ministry, but also to bear reproaches from the Press and the public, who think nothing of giving up a handsome income when others are concerned, and will talk of patriotism and public duty and readiness to serve one's country, and all that sort of thing. . . . Anyhow you will have to keep this prospect before your mind's eye always and in every respect, in Austin Friars as well as in Westminster. Think of Lowe and his unfortunate speech, which has marred his prospects and his usefulness. Some day you will be a Cabinet Minister, I think, and justly no doubt.

'In that position there is an end of moneymaking. What you have got, you may keep and that is all; whilst on the other hand your rank may be raised. It would be foolish to call this châteaux d'Espagne &c. when we know of so many to whom it has happened. If you get so far as into a seat in the Cabinet, why the chances are greater for than against a peerage, provided you can be spared in the Commons. And it follows, according to my notions, that you ought not to enter the administration at all before you have money enough for a peerage, and £—— will do for that and no less.'

And he goes on to say that, though hardly arrived yet at that amount, with another successful year or two of business his son would have enough.

Goschen accepted the offer of the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade without waiting for any accession to his income, and with all the risk attending the substitution of a political for a business career. A week later, having retired from his connexion with the Bank of England, he received the congratulations of the Court of Directors on his appointment and their regrets at losing him.

'Now,' writes his father, 'you have finished your work for Frühling and Göschen. Now, you work for the nation, and from my heart and soul I wish that the nation will derive as much benefit from your working on its behalf, and will be as ready to acknowledge gratefully that benefit, as Frühling and Göschen acknowledge your merit. You know in my dramatic disposition I have quite pourtrayed in my mind the scene when you handed over the key to your desk to your former partners, put on your hat, said Goodbye to the clerks, some of them, with partner Branns, in tears, and descended the steps into the street, no longer chief of Frühling and Göschen. . . .'

In January 1866 Goschen, as has been said, joined the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. On the same day, Lord Hartington entered the Cabinet, also for the first time, as Secretary of State for War, the object being—so it was said—to balance the introduction of a new man, and an advanced politician, by the heavy makeweight of the representative of the great Whig house of Cavendish.

High as Goschen's reputation stood, his advancement after so very short a career in the House of Commons took men by surprise. Several of Lord Russell's colleagues were anxious that the *Times* should be gratified by bringing into the Cabinet Mr. Lowe, who had written much for the leading journal in the past. The new Prime Minister, in appointing Goschen to the Duchy, acted in a courageous but somewhat abrupt fashion that was not unusual with him—played, in short, 'off his own bat,' as the expression went. Years afterwards, when in conversation with Mr. Gladstone, Mr. George Lefevre<sup>1</sup> once touched upon the right or propriety of a Prime Minister's introducing into the Cabinet a new Minister without previous consultation with his colleagues. Mr. Gladstone observed that he was aware of at least one instance where this had been done, and cited the case of Mr. Goschen, whose accession to the Cabinet he had himself learned for the first time from the newspapers! The parliamentary action of Goschen in regard to University tests had been little to the taste of Mr. Gladstone, whose sympathies at that time on that subject were thoroughly Conservative. It may well be that Lord Russell's anticipation of Mr. Gladstone's objections was the reason that he did not consult him as to a step which he had made up his own mind it was right to take. Inevitably, a good deal of jealousy was aroused amongst

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Eversley, from whom I had the story—A. D. E.

men who felt their own claims neglected. The world of Society knew little of Goschen, and the general public were naturally quite unaware of the high character and great abilities which had attracted the attention of Lord Russell.

‘Since Goschen’s transfiguration,’ writes Bernal Osborne to Delane on January 4, 1866, ‘every official feels insulted at being left out of the inner circle of “Head Centres”; indeed, I felt a melancholy satisfaction at being high and dry, and confess that had it been my lot to have been in active politics and have been stalemated by Goschen’s move to the Duchy and Cabinet, I could not have imitated Layard’s *quasi resignation!*’ This strange appointment by the Prime Minister, he goes on to say, ‘is one of the mistakes of a man who lives in the bosom of his own family, and takes no account of the sentiments or feelings of people outside his own circle.’<sup>1</sup>

On February 1 the new Parliament (the last elected under the provisions of the great Reform Act of 1832) was opened by the Queen in person. During its short life many events of the greatest importance occurred both at home and abroad. A moderate Reform Bill introduced by a Whig Ministry for the purpose of widening the electorate and enfranchising the more prosperous of the artisan class was rejected by the House of Commons, on the alleged ground that its democratic proposals tended to Americanise our institutions, to endanger property, and ultimately to destroy our Constitution altogether. In the following year the same House of Commons, under a Conservative Ministry, passed, and the House of Lords accepted, an infinitely more democratic measure. Mr. Disraeli, as he himself afterwards described it, had ‘educated his party.’ At that time the shock to men’s confidence

<sup>1</sup> *Life of John Delane*, by Arthur Dasent.

in the political morality of English statesmen was a severe one. Lord Robert Cecil (now become Lord Cranborne), Lord Carnarvon and General Peel did themselves honour by refusing all responsibility for a political manœuvring which, though greatly admired by Party wirepullers and politicians of the meaner sort, proved highly distasteful to vast numbers of genuine Conservatives, and undoubtedly, for many a long year to come, injured the credit of the Party with the general public.

Much was said at the time, and may still be said, as to the political morality or immorality of these proceedings; but perhaps it is more useful to dwell upon the change that had come over the conditions of political and Party warfare between the two Reform eras, 1831-32 and 1866-67. In the earlier period the struggle was frankly between privilege on the one side and popular rights or claims on the other. A generation later it was impossible to base effective resistance on privilege. Pocket boroughs and the Peerage no longer blocked the way. Conservatives not less than Liberals had come to realise that they could only succeed in political warfare by getting the general mass of the people on their side. The three Conservative statesmen who left Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli made a strong protest on behalf of political honour as against mere Party expediency. Such a protest is never without value. But it had no effect whatever in checking the policy which they opposed. In the country there was nothing behind them. So with Mr. Lowe's great speeches in 1866 and 1867. They thrilled the House of Commons, delighted the *habitués* of the clubs of London and the Common Rooms of Oxford, and afforded models of cultured parliamentary eloquence for later generations. On the general public they fell absolutely flat. On lines such as those

no Member of Parliament—no candidate—could possibly address a great popular gathering. Indeed, on the Conservative benches, and even amongst Tory squires themselves, many must have felt that the orator's magnificent appeals did not ring quite true. The orator might urge in the fullest conviction that with the advent of democratic reform his countrymen would find that the days of great Englishmen were no more, and that no one henceforth would soar above the dullest mediocrity. 'Night and day the gate is open that leads to that bare and level plain where every ant's nest is a mountain and every thistle is a forest tree.' Conservatives wildly cheered these sentiments. Their votes corresponded with their cheers, and the Bill of 1866 was lost.

The country now began to speak for itself. Ever since the introduction of the Bill crowded meetings for reform had been held. A great demonstration and banquet at Liverpool took place in April, when Mr. Gladstone, the Duke of Argyll and Mr. Goschen addressed enthusiastic audiences. After the Bill had been rejected, and a Conservative Ministry had come into office, the number and the vehemence of meetings and speakers increased. In Trafalgar Square Lord Russell was loudly condemned for resigning instead of dissolving, and the mob declared for manhood suffrage. The determination of the new Ministry to forbid the entrance of a Reform Procession into Hyde Park led to the levelling of the railings in Park Lane, and to rioting so violent as to necessitate the calling out of the Guards and the Household Cavalry in support of the police. Everywhere Mr. Gladstone was the popular hero, Whigs, Liberals and Radicals for the first time rallying with the utmost enthusiasm in his support. In the Session of 1867 Mr. Lowe's appeals to Conservative instincts were no less

eloquent than in the previous year; but the new Reform Bill was nominally, at all events, the measure of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, whilst Whigs and Radicals now sat in opposition. In 1866 it was Gladstone who was held up to scorn by his opponents for asking them to remember that £7 householders were men of 'our own flesh and blood.' In 1867 it was Disraeli who had no fear of a far wider franchise. 'I do not believe that the country is in danger; for England is safe in the race of men who inhabit her.'

Poor Mr. Lowe! He had fought a most honourable and most brilliant battle for a cause in which he genuinely believed; but even the squires for whom he spoke deserted him—'I see before me the gentlemen of England with their ancestry behind them and their posterity before them,' continuing in a passage of long-remembered eloquence. But these gentlemen were now sitting on the Government side of the House behind Mr. Disraeli, and they were deaf to his appeal. Mr. Grant Duff had taunted him with what was true enough, that the fates and destinies had been too strong for him.

'I have no fear of *them*, sir,' replied Mr. Lowe; 'what has been too strong for me is the shabbiness, the littleness and the meannesses that have met together. Upon a former occasion when I addressed the House, I took upon myself to make a prophecy. I said that if we embarked upon this course of democracy we should either ruin our party or our country. Sir, I was wrong; it is not a question of alternatives, we are going to ruin both.'

Parliamentary oratory in England never rose to a higher level than during the Reform debates of the years 1866 and 1867, when George Goschen, in the heartiest sympathy with his reforming colleagues, sat in 1866 as a Minister of the Crown on the Front Bench and on the Speaker's right, and

in 1867 as one of the Leaders of Opposition on the Speaker's left hand. The boyish dreams in his Union days of the glories of parliamentary debate must have been more than realised as he listened to the speeches of Gladstone and Bright, of Lowe and Disraeli. His own first speech as a Cabinet Minister on a subject of prime importance was made on the sixth night of the second reading debate on the Russell-Gladstone Reform Bill. He taunted the Opposition with their dread of the working class whom the Bill would enfranchise. It was the educated and most serious portion of that class, he said, which they seemed most to fear: 'they are more afraid of these when they think, than when they drink.' If we have representation at all, he argued, let it be a true representation of what exists—a sentiment which brought down Mr. Lowe upon him later in the debate:

'In the view of the Chancellor of the Duchy, Democracy wished to have everything as representative as possible, and that which is not representative, it likes to have swept away.'

Late at night on the eighth day of the debate, or rather early in the morning, came the memorable division. Mr. Gladstone, in as fine a speech as even he ever made in the House of Commons, wound up the long debate, and a scene of intense excitement followed, such as is rarely witnessed at Westminster. When it was declared that the majority for the Bill and the Government was only five the House realised that both were virtually defeated. Conservatives sprang on to the benches cheering and waving their hats, whilst the Adullamites on the Ministerial side of the House were not less noisily and violently demonstrative. In short, it was something very like an ovation for Lowe, as he stood there seeming to lead the cheers. 'Who would have

thought there was so much in Bob Lowe?' said one member to another. 'Why, he was one of the cleverest men in Lord Palmerston's Government!' 'All this comes of Lord Russell's sending for Goschen!' was the reply. 'Disraeli did not half so signally revenge himself against Peel,' interposed another; 'Lowe has very nearly broken up the Liberal Party.'

That Goschen's promotion to the Cabinet over many who had served the Liberal Party long and well should cause a certain amount of heart-burning was inevitable. It was also probable that in many cases disappointment and jealousy would be attributed by the gossips of the day to quarters where there was in truth no vestige of either. That Mr. Lowe, the leader of the famous 'Cave of Adullam,' disliked Lord Russell is certain; but that he was ever influenced by jealousy of Goschen is more than doubtful. At all events, during a long course of years Goschen and Lowe were the best of friends.

The Government were defeated on June 18 on Lord Dunkellin's amendment in favour of a borough franchise based on rating instead of rental. They at once resigned; but could they, and would they, on Her Majesty's request, withdraw their resignation and be prevailed upon to continue in office, of course, after asking for and obtaining a vote of confidence in the House of Commons? It was, it must be remembered, the first Session of a new Parliament. Moreover, the state of foreign affairs was at the time anxious, and a change of Government was on that account to be greatly deprecated. This was the question which for a few days occupied the public mind, and Ministers were believed not to be unanimous on the point. The Government had declared very early in the Session that they would stand or fall by their Reform Bill, and, indeed, it was

quite time for statesmen to prove they were in earnest on a subject which had been too long played with by previous Ministries. There could be no doubt as to the sincerity and earnest conviction of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone. Their firm determination to resign was thoroughly approved by the Chancellor of the Duchy, to whom Mr. Gladstone wrote on June 27, 1866:

‘MY DEAR GOSCHEN,

‘I thank you sincerely for your letter. Certainly I am glad that the pain of the few days which closed with yesterday is not to be renewed. I am also glad to feel convinced that those who most wished we should accept the vote of confidence will one by one first acquiesce mentally in, and at the last cordially welcome and approve the course which was taken. There is no power on earth I think that could have made me budge, but it was an immense comfort to me to be sustained by the judgment of several members of the Cabinet, as well as by the kind indulgence of all.’

And so Goschen found himself for the first time in his career sitting on the Speaker’s left hand. A Derby-Disraeli Ministry was again in office. It enjoyed the confidence neither of the House of Commons nor of the country, yet it passed a sweeping measure of democratic reform, and maintained its position till it was dismissed by the overwhelming majority of the new electorate which it had itself called into being. The Parliament elected at the end of Lord Palmerston’s life, though, owing to the action of ‘The Cave,’ it had rejected the Reform Bill of 1866, was undoubtedly far more Liberal in spirit than its predecessor. When Goschen took office, the charge of the University Tests Bill fell to Mr. Coleridge (in later life Lord Coleridge, Lord Chief Justice of England). It now obtained large

majorities in its favour. Lord Robert Cecil was as active as ever in his opposition to it, warmly congratulating its supporters upon 'having got a real live Churchman amongst them at last, whilst he recognised that eccentricities of opinion were to be found in the most unexpected and most able members.' He could not, however, prevent the Bill passing the House of Commons. Later in the Session it was rejected by the House of Lords. So, in March 1867, the Church Rates Abolition Bill passed the second reading in the Commons by a majority of seventy-six, Goschen supporting it, whilst the Conservative Ministry was placed in a minority. Whenever commercial or trading questions were before the House Goschen took a useful part in the debates, showing in general a strong leaning against excessive Government interference. Before Parliament was dissolved after a life of two years and a half, Goschen had made his individual attitude towards the greater political questions of the day pretty well understood. As regards foreign politics, he bestowed ungrudging praise on Lord Stanley, the Foreign Secretary, for the decided action he had taken in the dispute between France and Germany about Luxemburg.

'That action had saved Europe from war. There was a most serious lesson to be learnt from what had taken place, viz. that by the intervention of England in foreign affairs the greatest evils might on some occasions be avoided—evils not only to the nations engaged in war, but to this country itself.'

Having regard to our world-wide commerce and interests, he held that a policy of total abstention from the international affairs of Europe was impossible.

In these trying years (1864-68) much had occurred to force Goschen again to turn his most serious attention

to those subjects of commerce, currency and finance on which he had become a recognised authority even before he had entered upon a political career. In May 1866, in the very crisis of the Reform struggle, the failure of Overend and Gurney, and of other great commercial houses, had caused an almost unexampled panic in the City. The memorable 'Black Friday' was the eleventh of the month. The Government, through Mr. Gladstone the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the same evening informed the Bank of England that should the Bank find it necessary to issue notes beyond the statutory limit, they would apply to Parliament to legalise that proceeding. The knowledge that the Bank had obtained this authority helped to restore the confidence of the public, and in fact prevented the necessity arising for more than a quite trifling issue of notes. Long afterwards, when Goschen himself presided at the Exchequer, a state of alarm hardly less dangerous threatened the general stability of credit, but in the latter instance other means were available and were employed to weather the financial storm.

We have already seen in Goschen's early speeches his general way of regarding questions of currency and banking. With greater elaboration and thoroughness than was possible in a speech, he discussed in the *Edinburgh Review* of January 1865 and January 1868 the problems of 'dear' and of 'cheap' money, the effect of the new system of Limited Liability, and the principles underlying Peel's Bank Charter Act. These remarkable papers, named respectively 'Seven Per Cent.' and 'Two Per Cent.', were republished by Lord Goschen, with preface and introductory notes, in 1905.<sup>1</sup>

His standpoint was not, he declared in the latter year, and never had been, that of a trained and scientific economist. He had regarded this class of subject

<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Addresses on Economic Questions.*

'as a practical man of business, or as a public servant anxious to inquire into financial, social, and economic facts with a view to their bearing on matters of administration or legislation, rather than as an exponent of systems of political economy, and it had been on the analysis of complicated phenomena that he had bestowed most attention in his excursions into the domain of economics.'

When he wrote his book on 'Foreign Exchanges' he had, he said, read very little political economy, 'except Aristotle and John Stuart Mill,' and he attributed such 'ability as he possessed in dissecting complex monetary phenomena into their simple elements and presenting them in clear and intelligible phraseology, to the various mental processes through which he was put at Oxford.'

What were the real facts represented by such expressions as 'dear money' and 'cheap money'? January 1865 and January 1868, the dates of the two articles, presented an extraordinary contrast. During 1864 rates had ranged from six to nine per cent. '*An average rate of seven per cent.* seemed indeed intolerable. The instinctive belief that any dearness of loanable capital is in itself, apart from any cause whatever, a commercial calamity appears almost invincible.' The public, becoming exasperated at the long continued scarcity of capital, fastens that scarcity on our banking legislation. 'The Bank Charter Act is the universal scapegoat; and directly or indirectly is looked upon as the cause of all evil.'<sup>1</sup> Men who can give ample security for advances feel that there must be something wrong in our system, to prevent their obtaining loans at a moderate rate of interest. Goschen set himself to prove that the extraordinarily high interest that then prevailed was not caused by our legislation, or our system of currency or

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Essays*, p. 14.

banking, but was the result of the actual conditions of the day. The year 1865 was almost as unsatisfactory as its predecessor, and the Bank rate of discount was seventeen times changed, the year closing with 'seven per cent.' There was not much to complain of as regards foreign trade, or 'taking a broad view, as regards business in the country generally.' Still mischief was brewing, and the development of the limited liability system was prodigious. At the same time that these new fields for investment were opened foreign loans offering high interest were being put upon the market. Of this state of things 'seven per cent.' was the natural outcome. Consols, railway shares, and other stocks fell disastrously, and 'to those who could read them there were ominous signs of a coming storm.' The following year, as we have seen, the crash came.

The financial history of 1867 provided the subject-matter of Goschen's second article. That year would take rank in history, he declared, as

'the year of the unforeseen.' . . . In politics and in trade alike, 'probabilities were turned topsy turvy. . . .

'Money at two per cent.! The long looked for consummation has arrived, the financial Utopia has been reached. What castles in the air had not been imagined by governments, railway directors, engineers, companies, cotton growers, promoters, to be carried into actual execution and constructed when money should once more fall from seven per cent. to three?'

It was almost the same on the Continent. In the Bank of France as in the Bank of England were vast accumulations of gold. Money was cheap, why then in the name of wonder did people not borrow? 'Contrary to all theory, cheapness of money had not borne its accustomed fruit.' It had been accompanied by commercial depression.

falling prices and universal distrust. The depression was universal. Goschen believed that to a vast majority of willing borrowers 'Two per cent.' was little more than an ironical phrase. Bankers in the City might be discounting bills at two or even at one and a-half per cent.; but could governments, contractors, railway companies borrow at largely reduced terms? It was only true that capital and money were cheap within very narrow limits. And they were cheap in one quarter *because* they refused in another quarter to be hired at any price.

'The first impression of infinite abundance and cheapness dies away the nearer we look, and similarly we should find that a large proportion of the bullion excess in Paris and London dwindles very much on closer inspection. . . . "Two per cent." results not from the abundance but from the disgust of capital. Harassed by the misuses to which it has been put, by the disappointments it has suffered, by the impositions of which it has been made the dupe, capital in high dudgeon has retired to its tents. The situation of the moment is this: capital is on strike! It has struck against limited liability, against railways, against promoters, contractors, and engineers, against joint stock companies of every description; against speculators; partially against Foreign Governments.'

Thus Goschen argued that it was *not true* that money was at two per cent., if that expression means that the general facilities for borrowing were greatly increased. On the contrary, 'never was the public more indisposed to lend.' Sick of its previous investments, it was depositing unprecedented amounts in the strongest and most steady-going of banks—banks which would lend only to the most solvent of customers and discount only the safest bills.

'Hence,' he sums up, 'the plethora of that particular

kind of capital in one particular quarter, hence Two per cent. in Lombard Street, and in the discount office of the Bank of England.'

Elsewhere capital was seldom more difficult of access. The country had suffered and was suffering greatly. Every one was disheartened; and things would hardly improve till the impression of 1866 had passed away, the European outlook had become more serene, and 'the machinery for supplying English capital to Foreign Countries was once more at work.'

## CHAPTER III

### MR. GLADSTONE'S GREAT MINISTRY

ONLY a few days after Mr. Disraeli had accepted the position of First Minister of the Crown, on the retirement of Lord Derby, Mr. Gladstone, by giving notice (March 23, 1868) of his famous Disestablishment resolutions, flung down his challenge to the Conservative Party. Disraeli assuredly showed no slackness in taking it up. After eleven days of debate the first resolution was carried by a majority of sixty-five. Ministers were several times defeated but did not resign, and Parliament lived on to the end of July, when the arena of battle was transferred from the House of Commons to the country. In those days it was not the custom, and it would not have been thought constitutional, for an actual or expectant Prime Minister to address the electorate directly, and as a whole. An English Prime Minister, it was remembered, owed his position to the House of Commons. He was not, like an American President, appointed by the suffrage of the people. Nevertheless, some occasion was always chosen either for a letter to a brother statesmen or for an address to his own constituency, which letter or address served and was intended to serve as a Political Manifesto to the nation in general, and as the special appeal of a Party leader to his supporters all over the kingdom.

In the autumn Disraeli issued his address to the

electors of Buckinghamshire. To Mr. Gladstone's policy of disuniting Church and State in Ireland Her Majesty's Government, he said, would offer uncompromising resistance. The connexion between religion and political authority, he pointed out, was one of 'the main safeguards of the civilisation of man.' Spoliation of the Church in Ireland would be the precursor of confiscation in England.

'Amidst the discordant activity of many factions there moved the supreme purpose of one Power. The philosophic may flatter himself he is advancing in the cause of enlightened progress; the sectarian may be roused to exertion by anticipation of the downfall of ecclesiastical systems. These are transient efforts—vain and passing aspirations. The ultimate triumph, were our Church to fall, would be to that Power which would substitute for the authority of our sovereign the supremacy of a Foreign Prince—to that Power with whose traditions, learning, discipline, and organisation our Church alone has hitherto been able to cope, and that too, only when supported by a determined and devoted people.'

George Goschen's address (October 1, 1868) to the electors of London was characteristically clear and full in the enunciation of his political principles, and was marked, as were most of his speeches and addresses, by phrases which struck the public imagination.

'The Prime Minister has not scrupled to turn his sceptre of office into an incendiary torch. The cry has been raised of "Protestantism in danger," and religion invoked against the cause of justice. But the conscience of the country has not been led astray and its commonsense refuses to believe that Protestantism, Religion, or the Constitution can possibly suffer from a simple act of justice and national reparation. The adhesion to the policy of Mr. Gladstone by the great body of dissenters, those staunch upholders of Protestantism, is a sufficient comment on the hollowness of the cry.'

In the remainder of the address Goschen was eagerly looking forward to entering upon the reforms which were to make the coming Parliament famous in history: the reduction of our national expenditure, the establishment of national education, the nationalising of the Universities, the revision of the system and incidence of local rating, with a view to diminishing that oppressive burden of local taxes which was steadily increasing. By better and more businesslike administration he thought it possible to effect great economies, whilst at the same time efficiency would be increased.

‘Changes in our foreign policy and scientific revolutions in our armaments have not been followed up by corresponding changes in the distribution of our ships and troops. Steam and electricity have increased the ubiquity of our fleets, a more anxious regard for the sovereign rights of semi-civilised States has partly lightened and partly altered their duties. Yet costly squadrons of obsolete ships are still maintained at unnecessary stations,’ .

and thus both money and power were being frittered away. It would require, he declared, the hearty support of the country to enable reformers, however earnest, to overcome the traditional obstruction of naval and military prejudices.

The election for the City was fought under novel conditions. The House of Lords had inserted in the Reform Bill, and the House of Commons had accepted, a clause introducing the system of Minority representation in constituencies that returned more than two members. There were four seats for the City of London; but under the recent Reform Act, no elector could vote for more than three candidates. The Liberals hoped to retain all four seats. The Conservatives entered the field with three candidates only. Those were days of open voting, when declarations of the state of the poll were made hour by

hour by agents of the candidate who watched the voting. Elaborate arrangements were made by the Liberal Committee to divide the Party's strength equally between their candidates, so as to prevent the waste of votes which would be caused by one candidate polling a number far in excess of his colleagues. Early in September the Liberal candidates, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, Messrs. Crawford, Goschen and Lawrence, had issued a joint address informing the electors that, notwithstanding the Minority system, the strength of the Party was such as to entitle them to retain the whole of the representation; but in order to assure this result, i.e. the return of the four sitting members, the Chairman of the Liberal Committee, Sir Benjamin Phillipps, in the middle of October issued a circular pointing out that complete success could only be obtained 'if the suffrage of the electors were determinedly and intelligently distributed.' Great was the indignation of the Liberal Chairman and Party at the difficulty caused to them by what the former described as 'the Ukase of the Upper House,' and the introduction of a 'miserable three-cornered thimble-rigging system of voting' into the constitutional methods by which the ancient City of London had time out of mind chosen its members to serve in Parliament. Right or wrong, the new system was now the law in London, and the citizens had to make the best of it. The method which recommended itself to the Liberal Chairman and Committee in order to make sure of 'the intelligent distribution' of votes brought down upon them a good deal of criticism from their opponents. They issued a circular letter of instructions to their supporters, accompanied by printed forms, which electors were requested to sign and return, pledging them to distribute their votes between the Liberal candidates in the manner the District

Chairman or local Committee might consider best calculated to secure the return of all four sitting members. Till this advice was given the votes so pledged were to be held in reserve.

Conservative newspapers naturally made merry over the creation of this 'special reserve,' and scoffed at the spectacle of Liberal 'free and independent' electors pledged to obey the orders at the last moment of a 'Vote as you're told Committee!' Assuredly the scheme tended strongly to countervail the advantages of personal popularity possessed by an individual candidate. So it happened in the result; for Baron Rothschild, who, under the old system, might well have headed the poll, now found himself at the bottom of a list of seven candidates! Goschen stood first on the poll, two of his former colleagues and one Conservative being returned with him. Apart from personal predilections, it was maintained by favourers of the new system that the City was now much more truly represented than would have been the case had all Liberals been elected. On the other hand it was pointed out that a complete fiasco had only just been avoided, and a Conservative minority had gone very near to winning three out of the four seats!

The first testing of the 'Minority Clause' was watched with much interest both at home and abroad. It had behind it in England the authority of the Whig Earl Russell, and the Radical Philosopher John Stuart Mill, and of a good many of the more thoughtful school of Liberals; but it was hotly denounced by John Bright and by most English democrats. Mr. Disraeli accepted it somewhat coldly, and Mr. Gladstone frankly disliked it. Whilst the election was still pending M. Prévost Paradol published an article in the *Journal des Débats* thoroughly approving the object aimed at by the new system, which

he considered a great advance in the machinery of representation. He warmly reproached the City Liberals for their struggle to monopolise the whole representation of a constituency in which it was admitted on all hands that there was a very large minority of Conservatives. If the minority scheme were fairly worked, a true and just representation of the electorate would be effected. If, not recognising this, the majority tried to grasp the whole, it was extremely probable that an absolute fiasco would result. The state of the poll showed how narrowly this had been avoided. Some 14,400 electors polled, and the highest Conservative candidate polled 6130. The second and third Conservative candidates were respectively only thirty-one votes and one hundred and seventeen votes behind him, and though Goschen's own majority was a fairly substantial one (nearly four hundred over the leading Conservative), it is evident that he was within an ace of being the only Liberal returned. George Goschen's share of the election expenses amounted to £2800.

There was no mistaking in those days the ardour and thoroughness of George Goschen's desire for reform, and it is interesting to observe the lines on which he hoped that the zeal of the reformed and newly elected House of Commons would enable the nation to advance. His speeches before the election of course expounded and enforced the views shortly put forward in his address. He found in the past two and a-half years of Conservative government nothing with which he could sympathise, excepting the foreign policy of Lord Stanley, and this he attributed rather to Lord Stanley's personal and instinctive Liberalism than to the policy of the Conservative Party. In his eyes national economy was one of the most important objects at which wise statesmanship could aim. As in the

past, so in the future. Under Disraeli and the Tories estimates and expenditure alarmingly increased, whilst during the time that Gladstone had presided at the Exchequer there had been a continuous decrease. 'Mr. Disraeli had said that economy did not consist in the reckless decrease of expenditure. Certainly not! Neither did efficiency consist in the reckless increase of estimates.' In his belief the question of imperial expenditure was closely bound up with local expenditure, and, unhappily, local rates were constantly and everywhere increasing. The reform of local rating involved the reform of local government. As for London,

' the Municipal arrangements were disgraceful. There was no good government outside the City. The Metropolitan Board of Works as then constituted was an anomalous and defective institution. Money was spent without a proper account being rendered, and the whole subject required to be dealt with by a bold hand.'

Outside the main issue of the Irish Church, on which the General Election was fought, Goschen laid most stress on National Economy, on National Education, and on the reform of Local Government and Taxation.

With the new Parliament a new era was beginning, and Goschen was looking forward to it with eager hope.

' The working classes would now be able to make themselves more clearly felt as to their wishes. Those to whom taxation meant something really important would be able to take part in the destiny of the affairs of the country, and their presence in the House of Commons would be for good and not for evil.'

At this time Goschen was receiving letters from Mr. Lyulph Stanley<sup>1</sup> and other strong friends of the working-

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Stanley of Alderley, now Lord Sheffield.

man, asking him to use his influence with his colleague Baron Rothschild in favour of Mr. Howell, the working-man candidate for Aylesbury, where the comfortable peace of the two-membered constituency, represented by Baron Rothschild and a Conservative, had been greatly disturbed by the attempt of the Radicals to win a seat. As regards Aylesbury and other constituencies the Whips were receiving urgent appeals to prevent a breach between the Whig and Radical sections of the Liberal Party, whose success then, as since, depended upon their union at the poll.

The result of the General Election was so conclusive that Disraeli resigned before the new Parliament assembled. Gladstone, with a Liberal majority of a hundred behind him, was again in power, and George Goschen, with universal approval, was included in his Cabinet as President of the Poor Law Board. On December 26 he was re-elected without opposition after taking office. In that department, and afterwards as First Lord of the Admiralty, his administrative energies for the next five years were to find ample field.

His rapid rise had already gone far to realise the high expectations of his school and college friends. During the five years that he had sat in Parliament the House of Commons had been rich in orators and debaters of the first rank. On his own side of the House were Gladstone, Bright and Lowe, whilst opposite him had sat Disraeli, Gathorne-Hardy, Lord Robert Cecil and Sir Hugh Cairns. It was a great school in which the young statesman had opened his career. Even amongst newspapers by no means friendly to him, it was now beginning to be recognised that not only was his matter always good, but that as a speaker he was very far above the common. An intimate and extremely candid friend of Goschen's was, however, by no means satisfied that in the matter of speaking he was doing his

real talents full justice, and he besought him, 'earnestly and solemnly,' to take pains to improve.

'You must make style as style, and elocution as elocution,' wrote Mr. Bernard Cracraft<sup>1</sup> (October 8, 1868), 'your study for some hours a day for *the next few years*. You know what practising means, for you play the piano, and you must practise . . . the very scales and rudiments of elocution. I know it is gall and wormwood to you, I know everything which is honest and upright in you, everything which is anti-Disraelian, rebels against the thought, but for your own sake and the country you really wish and are fitted to serve, you must do it. . . . In your speech as reported in the *Star*, evidently verbatim, I find three consecutive sentences out of four *beginning* with "Now," showing that you were quite at a loss to cover your sequences. Now sequence is one of the first elements—mechanical but essential elements, of anything that can be called oratory. You have plenty of artillery—you can make as big guns as Dizzy and your shells are quite unsurpassed, but you are absolutely and wholly wanting in rolling fire. Yet this is purely matter of drill and can be acquired. It is that *one thing*, and that *only*, which separates you from the first orators of the day and places you in the third rank, instead of where you might most certainly be, in the first rank with Lowe and Bright and Gladstone,' and all because pride and prejudice would not allow him 'to study what is an art, but which you choose to consider artifice. On your part this seems to me a most distressing piece of littleness of mind.' His correspondent goes on at some length to point out the advantage of acquiring 'a repose and command of manner . . . the power of evolution—the habit of beginning quietly and expanding comfortably and with measured convenience to your audience what you want to say.' The study of a measured delivery would help to strengthen the throat.

<sup>1</sup> An old friend of Mr. Goschen; and his private secretary during his official career under Palmerston and Russell.

‘Nothing affects the throat more fundamentally than un-rhythmical agitation. Oh, laugh away! I speak *en pleine connaissance de cause*. . . . I know that there is only one thing that exceeds my impudence, and that is your pluck and wisdom.’

Goschen received the well-intended advice to seek the teaching of some competent actor with due humility and in the same spirit of friendship in which it was given; but he did not take it. ‘If you say,’ replied his correspondent, ‘that for fear of touching the histrionic, you positively refuse to study the artistic side of speaking—there is an end of it.’ Nevertheless, Goschen may well have paid *some* attention to the pointed criticism of his friend, who had certainly put his finger on several of the defects in elocution of many, then and since, whose speaking has always been very far above the average of even good speakers. A fortnight later this severe critic himself came to one of Goschen’s meetings. ‘I heard you speak on Friday and was quite electrified,’ he wrote.

Goschen was, indeed, never destined to stand as an orator in the same rank with such men as Gladstone and Bright; but his speaking had certainly high characteristics of its own, and few statesmen have ever surpassed him in the power of guiding by his speeches the intellects of those he addressed, whether in Parliament or on the platform. He had the gift of appealing to and enlisting in his support the strongest feelings of his audience without lowering by a single iota the intellectual quality of his address, or for a single moment forgetting to attend to the soundness of his reasoning. The same argumentative speech which had captivated the attention of a working-man audience in Scotland and Lancashire was, in print, pondered over with not less appreciation by experienced statesmen and the, perhaps, not less critical ‘armchair politicians’ of the clubs.

The same correspondent whose letters have just been quoted was present the following year in the House of Commons.

‘What a speech was Bright’s! What breadth—what evolution, what calm—what power—what *moral*! I saw Conservatives hide their faces and tears! Well, it is something to have lived to see, not only the introduction of household suffrage, but the abolition of the Irish Church! For I consider it done. Now is the time to beat the iron. Stay in, if you like, as long as you like, but do what is right.’

It was with enthusiasm such as this that the Liberals of 1869 were inspired.

The three years that followed were signalised by the accomplishment of useful and far-reaching reform in many directions. Parliament was occupied with Irish Church and Irish land; with the creation of a system of national education, the abolition of purchase, Mr. Cardwell’s and Sir Garnet Wolseley’s army reforms, and the establishment of a reserve; with the nationalising of the Universities by the removal of religious tests; with the Ballot Act. For these great measures Goschen, as a Cabinet Minister whose influence was ever increasing as the years passed, had his full share of responsibility. It was a Ministry of able statesmen that he had joined, bent on practical reforms, and Goschen’s own department was one where much required to be done.

Zealous to accomplish good work, it was with no little reluctance that, in his very first year of office, he was persuaded by Mr. Gladstone to lend him for a time the services of an able and most useful subordinate from his department to conduct certain inquiries in Ireland with reference to the contemplated Land Bill. The President of the Poor Law Board was needlessly afraid that his chief might attribute

his unwillingness to part with so useful an assistant to a desire to save himself trouble.

‘Be assured,’ writes Mr. Gladstone in reply (December 2, 1869), ‘that you are the very last man, in the Cabinet or out of it, whom I could suspect of slackness in duty. Much as I hoped from you at the P.L.B., you have outdone my expectations, and I only construe your eagerness for help of the best quality as a proof of your earnest desire that your very difficult work should be done in the best manner.’

The more Goschen considered the system which it had become his business to administer, the more he was struck by the confusion into which the piecemeal legislation on everything connected with local government had plunged it. No statesman had hitherto, with a view to reform, surveyed the subject of local government as a whole. In recent years many Bills had been introduced by private members or by the Government. But these had always attempted to deal with some definite and limited object. Some new want was felt, or in some particular place the old shoe pinched. To this the attention of Parliament had been directed. Thus, in a fashion thoroughly English, a system, or rather a no-system, had grown up, for which it was now time that constructive statesmanship should substitute organisation and method founded on sound principles and practical experience. The old poor rate established by the Statute of Elizabeth was the first universal and general provision for raising local funds for local purposes by means of an annual rate. For a long time new purposes were provided for by authorising new rates. Afterwards it was more common to impose on the overseers collecting the poor rate the duty of providing out of that rate funds for other purposes. As regards rates, authorities, areas, the confusion that reigned was

thoroughly exposed by two committees, the last of which, under Goschen's own presidency, had been appointed in 1870.

The following year Goschen, on behalf of the Government, introduced two measures—A 'Rating and House Tax Bill' and a 'Rating and Local Government Bill.'<sup>1</sup>

'We have, Sir,' he declared, 'a chaos as regards authorities, a chaos as regards rates, and a worse chaos than all as regards areas. And not only that, but every different form of election which it is possible to conceive is applied to the various local authorities who administer these various rates in their various areas. It is a curious fact that while we might expect to find not identical, yet at all events very similar, principles governing the election of guardians, the election of local boards, the election of highway surveyors and overseers, and the election of other local and parochial authorities, yet in all these cases a different form of election prevails. In some instances you have election by plurality of votes, in others by single votes: in some instances you have an election by owners and occupiers, in others by occupiers only; and where you have a plurality of votes, the scale varies—there being, for example, one scale for the election of guardians, and another for the election of highway surveyors.'

The object of Goschen's Bills was to introduce order into this chaos, and at the same time to secure that the burden of the rates fell justly and in due proportion on the various classes of property. Only a couple of months before, the House of Commons, where the Ministry had an ordinary Party majority of a hundred, had shown a majority of less than fifty for Goschen's motion of 'the previous Question,' against a resolution moved by Sir Massey Lopes, that real property was unduly burdened in respect of local rates. Goschen's speech on that occasion had shown how widely he differed from the mover of the resolution. The increased

<sup>1</sup> Speech in the House of Commons, April 3, 1871.

burden of local rates had fallen on urban rather than on rural districts, on houses rather than on land, and when local and imperial taxation were taken together land was found not to be burdened in England more heavily than in other countries, such as France and Belgium.

His proposals were now of a far-reaching character. The ratepayer, instead of being subjected to the payment of a number of different rates separately collected at different periods, was to be presented with a single request for the payment of a consolidated rate, specifying the different purposes for which the money was required. He would then for the first time be made aware of his whole liabilities for purposes of local government. Elected parochial boards, each with its own chairman to represent the parish, were to take the place of vestries, and all parochial officers were to be elected annually at the same meeting by the parliamentary method of election, instead of holding the separate elections hitherto required to choose, by varying methods, guardians, representatives of highway boards, etc. The parish chairmen of each petty sessional district were to choose one of themselves as a member of the County Financial Boards, which last were to be constituted half of justices and half of the representatives of the ratepayers so chosen, thus closely connecting the organisation of parish and county. At the same time it was proposed to 'cover the whole country with sanitary boards' by making the guardians the sanitary authority for each union. Most important of all, the scheme concentrated all the powers connected with local government, at that time vested in the Poor Law Board, the Home Office and the Privy Council, in one central department to be called the Local Government Board, whose President would be accountable to Parliament for the conduct of the department.

The question of how most equitably to distribute the burden of the expense of local government raised keen differences of opinion. Some maintained that local rates were paid *in fact* by owners and landlords, though it was upon the occupier that the demand was made. Others, with equal confidence, held that they were paid actually as well as apparently by occupiers and tenants. The subject had been much considered, and the Government had come to the conclusion that it was expedient and just that henceforth the system in practice in Scotland and Ireland should be followed, and that half the consolidated rate should in future be paid by the owner. They thought, moreover, that it was contrary to sound policy that owners should be able to exempt themselves by special contract from the liability to contribute to the expenses of local government, and for the future all arrangements by which the tenant undertook to relieve the landlord of these burdens would be void. Goschen did not allow that agriculture had suffered in any exceptional degree from the admitted increase of local rates. These had doubled in the last forty or fifty years—had in England and Wales increased from £8,000,000 to £16,000,000—but almost the whole of that increase was due to urban rates for town improvements. Pauperism had increased of late in the towns, but not in the country. Generally speaking, there had been no increase of rates on rural land, and ‘he declined to hurry to the relief of those who were infinitely better off now than they were forty years ago, and were not so much in need of relief as other large classes of the community.’ More relief, he declared, had been given to the land here in respect of both imperial and local taxation than in any other country in Europe, and ‘it was a mere chimera of Sir Massey Lopes to speak of land being so heavily burdened with rates and taxes that capital

was flying from the land and seeking other investments.<sup>1</sup> That neither the value of the land, nor rents, nor farmers' profits had diminished was clear from income-tax returns. With regard to rates on houses it was very different. There the burden had increased, and accordingly it was proposed to hand over the house tax from imperial taxation in relief of local rates.

The exemption of certain classes of property from rating, due to the wording of the Statute of Elizabeth, was removed, and thus for the first time metalliferous mines would bear their share of the burden which had been so long imposed upon coal mines. In the country it was also proposed to rate large buildings and houses, not at their letting value, which it had been difficult to ascertain, but on a rental calculated at four per cent. on their selling value. Goschen's measures were intended to form a comprehensive scheme for the establishment of local self-government; he had built on a foundation of principle, and he was earnestly endeavouring on the vexed question of the incidence of rates to bring about the fairest distribution possible between different classes of the community. That these reforms would be acceptable to everyone was not to be expected. The country gentlemen, for the most part, were vehemently hostile.<sup>1</sup> At the end of 1872, at Cirencester, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, in unmeasured language, which at the time gave some natural offence, attacked Goschen's recent policy at the Poor Law Board, and denounced his audacity in maintaining that landowners and land occupiers had no grievance, and in venturing even to assert that if imperial and local taxation were taken together, the squires were rather better off than other people! By that time,

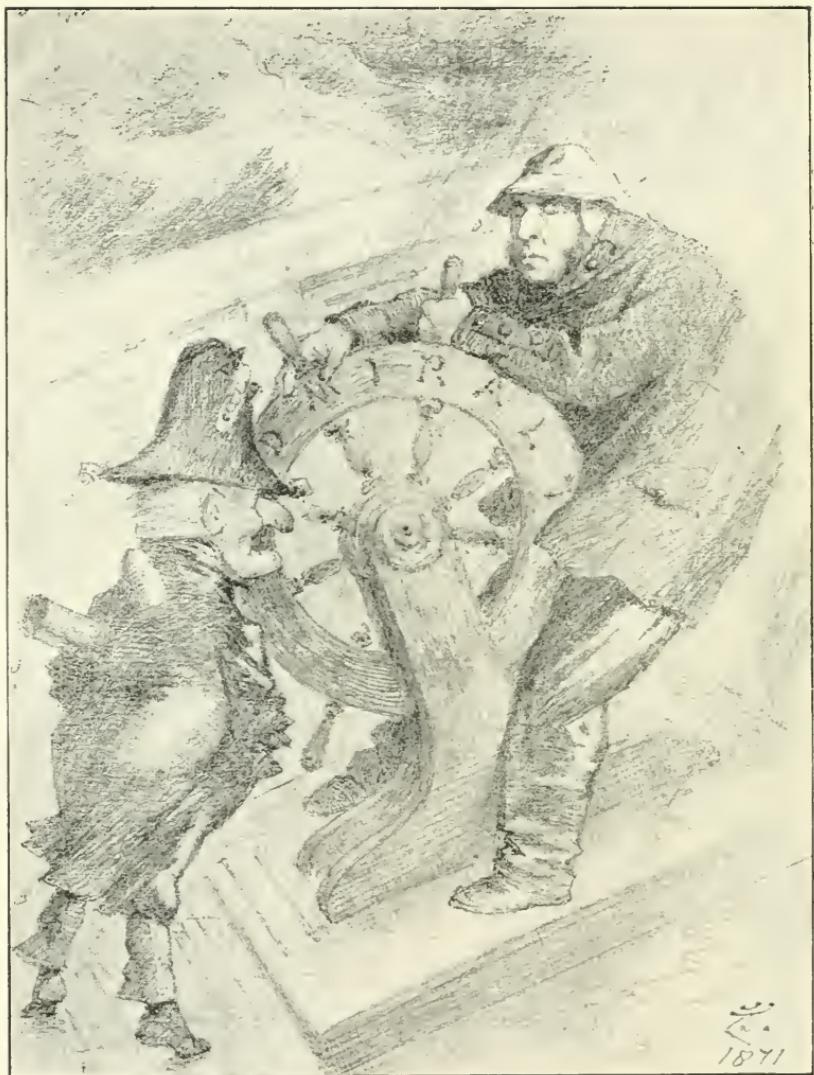
<sup>1</sup> In April, 1872, Sir Massey Lopes carried against the Government, by a majority of 100, a resolution to much the same effect as his resolution of the previous year.

however, Goschen had left the Poor Law Board, where Mr. Stansfield had succeeded him. He was now finding abundant scope for his energies in the high but arduous place of First Lord of the Admiralty.

In the department of the Admiralty under Mr. Childers the years 1869-71 were marked by reform not less vigorous than that which had overtaken the other great departments of the State. Changes, however desirable in themselves, even those which evidently in the long run will tend to improve professional conditions, sometimes bear hardly upon individuals, and almost always give offence to men who have grown up under an older system. In the army Mr. Cardwell's abolition of purchase was bitterly resented by nine out of ten of the officers, whilst the Admiralty reforms and schemes of retirement for naval officers framed by Mr. Childers not unnaturally exasperated many of those, especially amongst the older admirals, who found themselves shelved. It was unfortunate for him that, owing to a breakdown of health, it did not fall to the lot of Mr. Childers to carry into effect reforms upon which he had lavished years of strenuous work. The loss of the *Captain*, the turret ship designed by Captain Cowper Coles, in the Bay of Biscay (September 1870), with her designer himself on board and 500 men, was a disaster the responsibility for which many were inclined to lay on the Board of Admiralty. Between the First Lord and more than one member of his Board previously existing friction now came to a head. On personal as well as on public grounds, the loss of the *Captain* came home to Mr. Childers, whose son was on board, as one of the heaviest of calamities.<sup>1</sup> Overwork, anxiety and distress resulted in a breakdown of health, which made it

<sup>1</sup> Amongst the officers on board were also a son of Lord Northbrook and a nephew of Sir John Pakington. Thus two sons and a nephew of three First Lords went down with the ship.





*Sir John Tenniel.*

AT SEA

CAPTAIN PUNCH: "Hold on Mr. Goschen! Hold on Sir! You'll be all right when you've got your *Sea Legs*!!"

*Punch*, 18th March, 1871.

necessary for him, in the spring of 1871, to retire from office, and in March Goschen was invited by Mr. Gladstone to leave the department of the Poor Law Board in order to take up the higher position and the very arduous responsibilities of First Lord of the Admiralty.

It was therefore at an anxious moment that Goschen entered upon the duties of his new office. His speech in moving the Navy Estimates a few weeks later, by the grasp that it showed of a subject so new to him, won golden opinions and raised the hopes of a public not a little disquieted about naval affairs. It was, however, some time before the run of bad luck, if such it should be called, came to an end. In 1871 the glow of popular enthusiasm with which Gladstone's first Government began its career was wearing off. In particular, the rigid and useful public economies that had been effected by Ministerial exertions had offended whole classes to whom a lavish national expenditure seemed to mean increased employment. It had probably been right in the public interest to close the Government Dockyard at Deptford, but it was easy for political opponents to represent such a measure as an injury to the working classes, and to point to the consequences of that cheese-paring policy in pursuit of which Her Majesty's Ministers were sacrificing alike the safety of the country and the interests of army, navy, and British labour. In June the troopship *Megæra*, whilst on a voyage to Australia with troops on board, had been run aground in an unseaworthy condition on the Island of St. Paul, and abandoned. A court-martial afterwards entirely justified the conduct of her captain, officers and men, and the Admiralty was loudly censured in the press and by Members of Parliament for the condition in which they suffered their ships to go to sea. Earlier

in the same year the *Agincourt* had stranded in broad daylight and in clear weather on the Pearl Rock, off Gibraltar, and in August the Admiralty, after a full inquiry had been held, issued a Minute censuring the Vice- and Rear-Admirals in command of the Fleet for the negligence which was the primary cause of the disaster. Thus, during Goschen's first year at the Admiralty, there existed in the public mind a feeling of uneasiness and of doubt as to whether things had of late been well with the navy, and an earnest desire to see at the head of that great service the strongest administrative talent available.

Mr. Gladstone's Government had certainly done very much to redeem the pledges of economical administration that he and his friends had given. In both the great spending departments large reductions had been made. The policy of recalling our troops from distant colonies, and the destruction by Germany for the time being of the power of France, then our only rival in naval strength, had enabled considerable economies to be effected both in army and navy. Mr. Gladstone, nevertheless, had been far from satisfied with Mr. Lowe for not keeping a much more vigorous control over current expenditure. Indeed, he wrote to Lord Granville (September 9, 1873) that his Chancellor of the Exchequer had been 'wretchedly deficient' in checking the great expenditure and estimates, whilst he—Mr. Lowe—had actually taken to himself all the credit for reductions which were in fact due to the policy pursued by Mr. Cardwell and Mr. Childers.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lowe had not given the Prime Minister sufficient support in the Cabinet in this direction, or helped his chief in the efforts he had long made to compel the heads of departments to cut down expenditure with relentless vigour.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii.

## MR. GLADSTONE TO GOSCHEN.

'I have been writing to Cardwell about the estimates to the effect that we ought in the next Session to present them, between Army and Navy, circumstances continuing as they now are, with a diminution of not less than two millions. His reply leads me to believe that he will be able to do his share of that work. That share I have not assumed to be in the same ratio as the increase since the estimates of 1870, because changes and consequent charges have been called for in the Army to which there is nothing similar in the case of the Navy. But I have supposed it to be about two-thirds as against one-third, or in the ratio in which the vote of credit, which was the true measure of our war preparations, was divided. I hope it will not be very difficult for you to come up to this standard. From Childers I used to understand that when the extended or accelerated building operations, to which the vote of credit was applied, should have been concluded, matters would without violent effort return to their old course. I do not ask you at this very early date for an answer definite as to details; but I have no doubt that even now there must be matters of business coming forward which will be affected one way or another by the views you may see cause to entertain respecting the estimates of next year. . . . I hope you may think my views reasonable.'<sup>1</sup>

This drew from Goschen a somewhat full reply, dated September 22, to the following effect :

'Reductions in estimates may generally be secured by two distinct causes, (1) by economising in a number of details and paring off those extravagances which grow around every great department, and (2) by cutting down the actual solid results for which expenditure is incurred; the first class are departmental savings, the second involve a policy which the Head of the department cannot determine for himself.

<sup>1</sup> From Hawarden, September 16, 1871.

Childers has effected great things by departmental changes; and he has done more. He has impregnated the department to a very considerable extent with the spirit of economy. The necessary result is this, that his successors have less scope for further economic reform. In the six months which I have been at the Admiralty and during which I have naturally had my eye on the possibility of further changes in the direction of economy, I must candidly say that in many directions it appears to me that the limit has been reached, and that further reductions are almost impossible. For instance, as regards the *personnel* I do not think that anybody is in favour of reducing the number of our effective seamen, or of securing their services at less pay, or with less [*illegible*] &c. than at present. The purchasing of victual and clothing has been put on the best footing, and the stores of these articles have been reduced to a minimum. In fact I may say that as regards men and stores I cannot see means of diminishing estimates. Of course there is also the heavy vote for half-pay retirement schemes, pensions, &c. with which nothing can be done, as the scheme must now take its course. The only real votes to look to for important changes are those for shipbuilding and ship-repairing, and further dockyard works; and these involve a policy rather than departmental savings. I do not think the public in any given direction is prepared to be content with less naval force. On the contrary demands are being made for more ships in every quarter. Take the case of the East African slave trade, you may remember how anxious I was to ascertain what the views of the Cabinet really were on this point, but the Cabinet settled to let Gilpin have a Committee, and, as always happens in Committees, the officials could scarcely get any members on their side to vote with them, and the Committee were breast high for more ships notwithstanding my expenditure. It will be the same with the Polynesian slave trade, as it is called. More attention is being paid to that quarter than before, and in those vast regions, one or two ships do not go very far. On the

American stations there may be some reduction possible. I will say at once, to ease your mind, that as regards our great fighting ships I think we may go very slowly. That is where we are strongest and I should not propose to lay down any fresh ironclads of that class. No doubt a certain sum may be set free in that respect; but if we are to keep up the same number of ships as hitherto, and to do the same work, it is of course necessary to build a certain amount of tonnage every year. The cruiser frigates, corvettes, and sloops have been diminishing in number owing to the main force of the dockyards having been recently devoted to ironclads. I know that at present, for the service required, we have no ships to spare. On the contrary we are very hard pushed to find relief for ships which are ordered home, after their three or four years' service. The consequence is that old ships are taken over and over again, and the Admiralty is driven to run things rather fine. At this moment the two sea-going training ships containing cadets are on their last cruise which I should be prepared to sanction, looking to the reports on the ships, and we scarcely know how to find available ships to take their place. Then there is the question of gunboats, on which you know the exacting views of the public. I cannot bear to see the enormous amount annually spent in repairs; it seems so unprofitable, and it seems impossible to resist the impression that much unnecessary work is done; but I certainly think that in the Constructor's department there has been up to this moment a great anxiety to keep down this item of repairs as low as possible. Now, depend upon it, the Constructor's department will be very careful as to cutting down suggested alterations and repairs reported to be desirable by the inspecting officers at the Dockyards. They will take care naturally that they at least may remain quit of the responsibility of sending a ship to sea anything less than perfect in every respect. I am considerably alarmed about this past business, and it is the one over which a non-professional man can exercise least control. If the estimates are to be largely reduced, I feel sure (though

I can of course only form a very general opinion at present) that it is only to be done by building fewer ships, and we can only afford to build fewer ships if we make up our minds to reduce our squadrons, and to undertake less duties in every part of the world. On that, of course, I can say little till I know your views and those of the Cabinet, and this subject is so large it is very difficult to deal with it by letter. I shall be fully prepared when we meet in November to lay exact statements before you of the ships that we have, and the ships that we want on the present scale of naval work. The fact is, half our expenditure is not for war service in the strict sense, but for keeping the police of the seas and protecting commerce during times of peace, and for carrying out our views as to protecting semi-barbarous and barbarous men against kidnapping and various forms of outrage. Philanthropy decidedly costs money. I quite concur in the view that it is most important to us that we should present economical estimates next year. On the other hand, taking even the grounds of political expediency, it seems to me equally important that there should be no disasters, owing to economical pressure, and that the work which we undertake to do should be thoroughly well done. I do not see how I could be responsible for the department on any other condition, and in many directions I must frankly say that I think economy has reached its limits in naval administration.'

Mr. Gladstone replied next day.<sup>1</sup> He 'could well believe that in many portions of the field Childers had left little harvest to gather in.' But as to repairs he would make one 'trivial remark.' He called to mind that when he went on his mission to Corfu, in 1858, two or three cabins had been run up on board the *Terrible* for his accommodation, and he was afterwards more astonished than he had ever been in his life on hearing that this had cost some hundreds of pounds, for which a tenth of that sum

<sup>1</sup> From Hawarden, September 23, 1871.

would, he thought, have been ample. But Mr. Goschen's letter hardly met the view he had intended to present, and he therefore proceeded to state it in a few words:

'The estimates of 1869 and 1870 were framed on a very definite basis of policy. They maintained, I think, the number of men you now have: and I also think we looked rather to progressive though moderate reductions in after years, and certainly not to any extension of them in quiet times. Then came the crisis of July 1870, and the vote of credit. This vote, *quoad* the Navy, was, as I understood, directed to building purposes, and an expansion of our stock of vessels was put in hand. This expansion went to anticipate the work of coming years and in so far to relieve those years. Under these circumstances I have supposed that the estimates of 1870 would be the natural *prima facie* basis of those of 1872. I have indicated some probable causes of variation from then downwards, and you have pointed to some which would work upwards. However these may adjust themselves, I hope we shall get back to that basis on the whole. Of the sufficiency of any given number of ships for a particular service I should be no judge; and I should accept your conclusions with full confidence. That for which I have been disposed to contend is that we are to have a powerful fleet in and near our own waters, and that outside of this nothing is to be maintained except for well-defined and approved purposes of actual service, and in quantities of force properly adjusted; and not under the notion that there are to be fleets in the various quarters of the world ready when a difficulty arises with a foreign country, or an offence to our ships, *then and there* to deal with it with a strong hand.

'One other word on Committees. Even when, as is so often the case, they go astray, they may still yield two advantages: first they enable the Government to initiate opposition to extravagant schemes in an inoffensive form; secondly they enable it to put its case upon record, and this

I hope will in the case of the Thames Embankment prove to have been a very important point. I go to Balmoral on Thursday.'

The Navy Estimates for 1872 amounted to nine and a half millions, and the vote was for 61,000 men and boys. In July of that year the rise of prices was tending to swell the necessary expenditure of his department, and Goschen laid before the Prime Minister some facts relating thereto which impressed him a good deal.

'But I greatly doubt,' wrote the latter in reply,<sup>1</sup> 'whether on general principles you ought to take a supplemental estimate to meet this rise during the present Session. If you do, you may ask more than you will ultimately find you want; but you may also ask less, and may require a second supplemental estimate before the close of the year. It is a great and sound rule of financial administration to make a great and serious matter of these supplemental Estimates, which disturb the annual reckoning with the House of Commons. It is most important to keep that annual reckoning definite and fixed. This cannot always be done; but in the cases of exception, it is important that the disturbance itself should as far as possible be definite and substantive, and not in itself liable to the chances of further correction. To mention the state of facts and to indicate the likelihood of a rectifying estimate before the close of the year, would, I think, be open to no objection. What I have said of these supplemental estimates is meant to apply to the Army and the Navy. In the Civil Branch we have introduced a new system, which seems to require them as a normal part of our system. And this is a very serious evil: whether counterbalanced or not by greater good, I feel hardly able to say.'

Throughout the whole of that autumn Mr. Gladstone was doing his very best to check extravagance in the spending

<sup>1</sup> From 10 Downing Street, July 9, 1872.

departments. On the west coast of Africa it had been necessary before the Cabinet dispersed to authorise and provide for an expedition to repel the invasion of the territories of our allies on the Gold Coast and to punish the aggressors. But by the end of September it appeared probable that an effort more considerable than the river expedition already authorised would be required. Sir Garnet Wolseley and his Staff had sailed, and Mr. Gladstone feared that an Ashantee war on a much larger scale than had been contemplated by the Cabinet at its last meeting was about to begin.

'The question of an expedition to Coomassie' (Gladstone to Goschen, September 21, 1873) 'to be carried on with the aid of an European force, now stands over till the end of November. I think the Cabinet would be surprised, and ill-satisfied if, coming up for the first time some weeks hence, they found that extensive and costly preparations had been made in anticipation of an affirmative decision as to that expedition, and this without their having even been supplied with the particulars of what was being done, or with any information local, military, or political to give them any clear comprehension of the state and prospects of a question on which they are necessarily ignorant. . . .'

It was unfortunate that they had had to proceed so far without the privity of Parliament, but Gladstone hoped that Goschen would concur with him in thinking an early meeting of the Cabinet essential.

As often happens, it had become necessary to make preparations and to incur cost in the view of a possibility which might never occur. To fit out and send to the Gold Coast a hospital ship would, for instance, be money wasted if no land expedition took place. To Mr. Gladstone it was always especially distasteful to take expensive measures of

precaution against events which his sanguine nature led him to think in the last degree improbable. On this occasion his colleagues—Goschen, Cardwell, Lord Kimberley—acted the part of strong men, and insisted on adequate preparations. Lord Kimberley from the Colonial Office and Mr. Cardwell from the War Office wrote to Goschen on the same day—September 12, 1873. Their letters show how, in such an empire as ours, it is sometimes impossible, however strong our desire for peace, to avoid 'little wars.'

'MY DEAR GOSCHEN' (wrote Lord Kimberley),

'You will have seen from the instructions to Sir G. Wolseley . . . that the decision as to sending him any considerable reinforcement of European troops for an expedition into the interior is distinctly reserved for the Government. In the meantime he will of course take whatever measures he thinks expedient with the forces at his disposal on the Coast: and the contingency that he may find those forces sufficient for any operations he may undertake is alluded to as possible. So far then it seems to me we have committed ourselves to nothing which can be deemed imprudent even by those who are most opposed to any extensive operations against the Ashantees. I have never shared the wild notions which filled the newspapers for weeks about the necessity for the destruction of the Ashantee power, &c., &c. The hot fit which was disgusting to any rational man is now about to be succeeded by a cold fit, not much better. I apprehend we none of us are likely to run into any of these extremes. We should be delighted if we can finish the business in a decently creditable manner without sending more European troops and without an expedition to Coomassie: on the other hand, we are not deluded by the talk about the Ashantees being an interesting nation of traders whom we have only to treat reasonably in order to make them fast friends and excellent consumers of cotton and hardware. If the Ashantees remain where they

are, within a few miles of Cape Coast and Elmina: (1) we must keep a large force to defend the forts and be subject to perpetual menace and alarms, if to nothing worse. (2) As the Fantees cannot sow or reap the crops a famine is certain before long; and we shall have to feed the population congregated at Cape Coast and Elmina, 40,000 or 50,000 persons. This is now costing a large sum, and will cost more. (3) With famine will assuredly come pestilence. (4) A large part of the population is said to have been driven away as slaves by the Ashantees, and the country as a producing country is almost ruined in parts. (5) The Ashantees, emboldened by our fears, if we are inactive, will doubtless overrun all the Eastern Districts not hitherto conquered by them in this war. On the other hand, the cost of merely defending the forts and feeding the population of Fantees might not in the long run amount to more, and perhaps to less, than the cost of active measures against the Ashantees. The loss of life . . . may be the same as if there is an expedition . . . but being spread over a longer period it will create less sensation at home. After a time the Ashantees, having reduced the tribes of Fantees &c. to slavery, would probably be not worse neighbours than they are, perhaps better; and if we paid them a tribute under the name of a stipend for permission to occupy the forts, I think what is called a *modus vivendi* might be arranged with them. These seem to me our prospects if we leave the Ashantees alone.

'If on the other hand we are not satisfied with this, and mean to compel them to retire from the "Protectorate," I suppose we must attack them. Certainly if we do not mean to do so, we committed a great mistake when we sent out Glover, and an equally great one when we sent out Wolseley. Wolseley may come to the opinion (1) that nothing can safely be attempted against the Ashantees—in which case I suppose he will have to come home again, (2) that he can and will take certain steps with the force which he has on the coast or can raise from the natives, in

which case we shall let him try, (3) that he wants a force of European troops to march against Coomassie, in which case we shall have a Cabinet. Of course I grant that if the Ashantees kindly retire, and leave us alone, which no one expects except —, the whole problem will be changed, and will assume a more peaceful aspect. . . . The question then remains, on a review of the whole case, are we so persuaded that the whole affair will end, so to say, in smoke that it is unnecessary to be prepared with a hospital ship? I should have thought that to prepare, even though at some expense, a hospital ship was the only safe course. Suppose we *do* send out more European troops and that they die like rotten sheep on shore because there is no hospital ship, would that not be worse than to incur uselessly the expense of a hospital ship. . . . Do not forget that we are tied for time. If everything is not ready in December we may find ourselves in the sickly months again and nothing done.'

Mr. Cardwell writes to Goschen on the same day that no one is more against an ambitious policy on the Gold Coast than he is; but what can be done?

'Could Kimberley leave a state of things in existence, under which his revenue is destroyed by a barbarian invader, and the people whom he assumes to govern are butchered or enslaved? Is he to eat humble pie and withdraw? Is he, like —, to wait in the hope that the savages may think better of it? Like the man in the play, who when his house was on fire did not send for the engines because he thought that perhaps the fire would go out of itself. . . . Surely it is necessary to spend some money to avert the hazard of protracting the present state of things: and I think the preparation of a hospital ship is surely an unexceptionable part of such expenditure. Whether this should properly come on the Colonial or Navy estimates is another question.'

The expedition to Coomassie was brilliantly successful,

thanks to the admirable management of Sir Garnet Wolseley on the spot, and the efficiency of the arrangements made by the military and naval departments; but the news of the happy termination of the war came too late to be of any use to the Government. It was not till March, when Mr. Disraeli and a new Ministry were in office, that Lieut. Wood arrived in London, from Sir Garnet Wolseley's headquarters, with King Coffee's umbrella, and the news of the capture of Coomassie, the flight of the King, and the return of the troops to the coast.

Whilst Goschen had been steadily winning the confidence of the Navy and of men acquainted with naval requirements, the Government as a whole was no less steadily losing popularity in the country. It is astonishing how rapidly the enthusiasm, with which Mr. Gladstone's first Ministry was welcomed, melted away. This was not due to failure, for no Administration has ever won a better name with posterity for the greatness and usefulness of the reforms which it effected. Time has enabled men to see things in better perspective than was possible to most of those actually engaged in the conflicts of the hour. No serious politician or historian to-day would declare that property was endangered by the revolutionary aims of Her Majesty's Ministers in the years 1868-74, or that the nation had been disgraced and dishonoured by the Alabama Treaty and the Geneva Arbitration; or that Lord Cardwell had ruined the British army, and was the almost disloyal author of disastrous changes in its relation to the Sovereign. Mr. Gladstone's desire for national economy amounted to a passion, and though on platforms such doctrines may win cheers, in practice the reduction of expenditure is almost always unpopular.

There are times, and they are not infrequent, when

language which comes to be accounted at the bar of history little better than clap-trap tells heavily with the public. It is rarely that a party leader in modern political warfare sets himself to calm the public mind. The iron must be beaten whilst it is hot. The poet's conception of the statesman as one who would maintain

‘The day against the moment, and the year  
Against the day. . . .’

is becoming more and more difficult of realisation, and when Disraeli, taking advantage of the prevalent feeling, declared that the Gladstone Administration was

‘avowedly formed on a principle of violence,’ that ‘their specific was to despoil churches and to plunder landlords,’ that ‘not satiated with the spoliation and anarchy of Ireland, they were attacking every institution and every interest, every class and calling in the country, . . . that even the widow and the orphan were threatened by the profligate proposition to plunder their lowly heritage,’<sup>1</sup>

his language was received with rapturous applause by tens of thousands of men. And so it served its turn. In truth, few Governments have been more unpopular than the great Government of Mr. Gladstone after it had been three years in power. In bringing this about, Goschen was not without his own share of responsibility; though, in the eyes of the public, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Cardwell, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Bruce, and Mr. Ayrton were the chief objects of censure and ridicule—in some cases on account of the unpopularity of their measures, in others on account of personal characteristics or acerbities which provoked unmerited hostility. It was a little hard on Goschen, as coming from Cardwell, when the latter statesman said to him, ‘Nothing has gone right

<sup>1</sup> Speech of Mr. Disraeli at Manchester.

with us since you alienated the country gentlemen by your Local Government Bill, and Bruce alienated the licensed victuallers by his Licensing Bill.'<sup>1</sup> But probably the most dangerous and enduring of all the political enmities provoked was the hostility on the part of Dissenters to the provisions of Mr. Forster's Education Act. Mr. George Trevelyan's resignation of a subordinate post in the Ministry had emphasised this feeling, whilst Mr. Otway's resignation of the Under-Secretaryship of the Foreign Office similarly emphasised the uneasy feeling of men interested in foreign affairs caused by what they called 'the surrender' of Lord Granville to Gortschakoff's denunciation of the Treaty of Paris.

At the Colston Banquet at Bristol at the end of 1872 Goschen showed himself very conscious of the highly critical spirit in which the action of the Government during the preceding four years was being judged. It is easy to see a generation afterwards that if opponents of reform grossly exaggerated the importance of their objections, reformers themselves sometimes exaggerated hardly less the beneficent results which would be produced by many of their measures. In Ireland, said Goschen, they had done what they were told was impossible. They had abolished the Church ; they had solved the land question ; they had passed the Ballot Act ; they had settled English education ; they were contemplating measures affecting English land. The Liberal Party were in no sense, he declared, hostile to rights of property :

' Ministers were guided by principles and knew the goal to which they were going. . . . And one of their principles was to refuse to purchase the support of classes at the public expense.'

<sup>1</sup> Goschen himself told this to Sir Spencer Walpole.

A weak Government must, no doubt, be always trimming its sails, but he believed in the duty imposed on a strong Government to behave as such.

'They could stand more stoutly by their principles, they could show more distinctly that there were certain principles which should and must be maintained, and which must be carried out sometimes even in spite of pressure put upon them by their own supporters.'

On grounds of principle they had resisted successfully much pressure to compel them to have recourse to foolish remedies at trying times. Thus,

'two years ago there had been a considerable increase of pauperism, and people said that things were going from bad to worse, that there was not sufficient employment, that population was multiplying too fast; and that the only possible plan to remedy it was a gigantic scheme of Government emigration.'

Ministers were severely attacked on that subject, but they resisted successfully, and now everyone saw that they had been right, and a prosperity rarely equalled had returned to them.

'There were always panics going on at the present day. Social panics, navy panics, army panics, strike panics, panics as regards labourers, and as regards currency. It would almost seem as if this old country's nerves were shattered. The latest of all panics,' he continued, 'was the navy panic. The Government had been charged with having done nothing for the defences of the country—nothing as regards ironclads—nothing to secure that naval supremacy which Englishmen were anxious to maintain.'

It might be that Russia had a more heavily armed ship than our *Devastation*, but naval strength depended on the comparative power of fleets rather than of single ships.

Here there was no comparison possible between the naval strength of other nations and our own, and we were besides far in advance of them in the power of rapidly adding men-of-war to our navy. He and his colleagues had added no less than forty thousand tons, i.e. ten ships—the heaviest ironclads then employed—since they came into office. He then showed in some detail that whilst great watchfulness was necessary and considerable expenditure required, they ought not to be 'frightened into panic shipbuilding,' as the naval strength of the country, both actual and potential, was far greater than that of other nations.

On the subject of the *Alabama* claims he joined issue with the critics of the Government. They had been under 'tremendous pressure,' and he was proud of the firmness that had been shown.

'It required more courage to do what was right than to do what was wrong. England was strong enough and great enough to pay three millions without dread of the insinuation that she paid them because she was afraid.'

Last of all Goschen touched on that tenderest topic—the dissatisfaction of Dissenters with Mr. Forster's Education Act. To some statesmen it would have been natural and easy to conceal in a cloud of words their own individual opinions and preferences on a subject about which Liberals were sharply and bitterly divided. This was never Goschen's way.

'He knew,' he said, 'what they owed to the power of the Dissenters, but for whom they would not have been in power. But the Dissenters would not wish them to budge one inch from the course they thought was right, and that they could not honestly and conscientiously fall in with the views which they desired them to accept. While they hoped still to have their confidence, while they thought of

the many battles they had fought together to a successful issue, they certainly would not wish it to be understood that, because of their power, they must adopt any particular course. They would prefer that he should speak thus than that he should sit by in silence and appear to agree to that which must afterwards lead to misunderstanding.'

Goschen, as we have seen, showed himself from his entry into political life deeply interested in foreign policy. During the first years of Mr. Gladstone's great Ministry the Franco-German War, the Russian denunciation of the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Peace of 1856, and our relations with the United States of America, had been the subject of anxious consideration. In September 1870, after the Republican Government had been formed in Paris, and whilst Bazaine's army was closely invested at Metz, M. Thiers was in London endeavouring to persuade Lord Granville to exert what influence he could to induce the Prussians to accept moderate terms of peace. The Cabinet had hitherto been in complete agreement in the policy of absolute neutrality between the two combatants. Popular sympathy at the commencement of the war was strongly on the side of the Germans, but the misfortunes of France had called forth much British sympathy, and the threatened dismemberment of that country was now still further increasing the number of her well-wishers. Gladstone was zealously in favour of engaging the other neutral Powers to concur in a protest against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine without any reference to the wishes of the populations of those provinces. On September 30 the subject was keenly discussed by Ministers, and Gladstone was beaten in his own Cabinet.

'Quite exhausted,' wrote Lord Granville to Lady Granville, 'after the longest fight I ever had against Gladstone.

The losses were great ; the killed and wounded innumerable ; but I remained in possession of the field and the Cabinet. He wanted to declare our views on the conditions of peace ; I was against doing so.'<sup>1</sup>

Goschen sided with Gladstone, and shortly after the Cabinet he gave his reasons for doing so in the following letter to Lord Granville :

' Will you forgive me if I trouble you with a very few lines on the subject of the main question discussed at the Cabinet on Friday ? I have been on the whole so *d'accord* with the policy of giving no advice to either side, and preserving before the public the most absolute neutrality even in sentiment, that I feel bound to explain to you why suddenly, as you might fairly say, I took the view that a despatch in the sense suggested by Mr. G. was desirable. What I have been opposed to, in common I believe with all the Cabinet, is the giving advice, the offering mediation, the useless attempt of bringing people together who won't be brought together. And I should be most jealous too of every action based on any idea of Prussia becoming too strong or France too weak. On the whole I have cordially sympathised with the German victories and quite think the downfall of the military prestige of France will be of incalculable benefit. But I confess I see great danger ahead in the unbounded success not only of the German arms, but of Bismarck's unscrupulous, cynical, and cruel policy. I don't know that anything actually occurred which gave us any actual *locus standi* for showing our cards one way or another, and therefore, though beginning to feel most uneasy at the unchecked progress of Bismarckism, I still considered you were perfectly right in preserving absolute silence. But Mr. Gladstone's draft despatch seemed to me to afford some standing ground. It was not advice, or meddling or mediation. It was practically a protest against a principle which

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Lord Granville*, by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice. See also Lord Morley's *Life of Mr. Gladstone*.

is universally rejected by the Liberal Party throughout Europe. The ground seemed to me so firm and sure that it would bear a policy rested upon it, and though the gravity of such a step could certainly not be exaggerated, I for my part felt convinced that we should be taking up our position in so firm a manner that we should be strong enough to hold it. Mr. Gladstone's proposal seemed to me to offer what I had not seen my way to before—the means of giving the tone to European public opinion in a way which would secure a vast mass of sympathy on our side on a broad popular basis which would not be misunderstood. . . . Let me end as I began by asking you to forgive this long rigmarole. I was anxious to say a few words on behalf of the course which seemed to me to combine the advantages of (1) being just and right in itself, (2) opening a moral campaign against Bismarckism, militarism and retrograde political morality, (3) giving a lead to opinion in this country at a moment when everybody is at sea, and grounding our actions and our sympathies not on a preference for one of the belligerents but on political truth.'

Lord Granville replied from Walmer Castle on October 5, quite unshaken in his opinion that the Cabinet was right to refuse to

'lay down a general principle at an inopportune moment which could have only one practical meaning, viz. that, although we cannot prevent it, the Prussians are not to take away any territory from the French. . . . As far as sound English feeling goes, I believe it is entirely in favour of neutrality, and any one-sided and unnecessary declaration would lay us open to more blame than praise. Much as we must strive to keep our party with us, the primary object must be to serve the national interest in this crisis. . . . I cannot say how sorry I am at this first difference with Gladstone: his kindness and assistance have been unlimited. He sometimes forgets in talking with diplomats

that they record every word he says, but his knowledge and his large views are admirable.'<sup>1</sup>

The Gortschakoff Circular of October 31 to the Powers, declaring the intention of the Czar to ignore the restrictions imposed upon Russia by the Treaty of Paris as regards the neutralisation of the Black Sea, must have further convinced Lord Granville of the impossibility of obtaining general European concurrence against a German policy of annexation. For objects that each nation had in view, a mutual good understanding between Russia and Germany was precious to both, and it does not appear that Goschen urged any further upon Lord Granville the course which he had supported at the time of the visit of M. Thiers. Mr. Gladstone had reluctantly given way; but remained unconvinced, and even at the end of December he expressed to Lord Granville his strong belief that annexation would prove but '*the beginning of a new series of European complications.*'

In the summer of 1872 the arbitrators appointed under the Treaty of Washington to decide the so-called '*Alabama Claims*' met at Geneva under circumstances which made it seem probable that, owing to a difference of opinion between England and the United States as to the scope of the authority of the tribunal, the whole proceedings might collapse. The Americans had included in their case (over and above the claims for compensation for individual damage) indirect, constructive, consequential and national claims, to which Mr. Gladstone had declared, in the House of Commons (February 9, 1872), that we should be insane to accede, and 'which no nation with a spark of honour or spirit left could submit to even at the point of death.'

<sup>1</sup> This letter is given in full in *Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice's Life of Lord Granville*, vol. ii. p. 63.

The language of the treaty was itself ambiguous, indeed, had been intentionally so left. For Lord Ripon and his colleagues, Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Bernard, knew that no treaty would have been signed had they insisted on a repudiation in plain terms of the 'indirect claims.' The British Commissioners contented themselves with the belief that these claims were so unreasonable that no Court of Arbitration would hesitate to dismiss them, and the American Commissioners were understood to entertain much the same opinion, but felt compelled, by considerations of an electioneering character, to show them outward respect and to have them laid before the tribunal for its decision. There were differences of opinion in the Cabinet on June 15. Goschen's view is made clear in the following letter :

‘66 Mount Street.

‘DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

‘I fear I represented but too plainly my deep reluctance to the course adopted by the Cabinet to-day, that reluctance arising mainly, but by no means exclusively, from the view that if such a course is finally accepted the Washington Treaty would not result in a final settlement of all the claims made upon this country by the U.S. in respect of those very occurrences that have led to the present arbitration. I can scarcely reconcile myself to a course which leaves the indirect claims an unsettled question between the two countries, while we shall have submitted to an award on the other issues. But the extent of my misgiving will depend very materially on the further action on the part of the Government which this step may involve. What, I ask myself, can I rely on, as the policy of the Government in the future in respect of these indirect claims if after the proceedings contemplated on Monday they should again be put forward by the U.S.A. as a matter of contention and dispute. I ask the question fairly of the Government, thinking that if I am to be committed to a step

which apparently leaves these claims unsettled I may without presumption ask for an explicit statement as to the views of the Cabinet of our duties in regard to them. Lord Granville's answer, I am bound to say, was eminently unsatisfactory, and if that answer were to be the last word on the subject, I do not see how, holding the views I do, I could remain a member of the Cabinet. He would say the question is entirely hypothetical, but to me it has a very practical bearing. Will the Government, when they give an account of their proceedings, be entitled to say that they regard these claims as to all intents and purposes extinguished and as no longer a possible subject of negotiation? Do I clearly understand it to be the view of the Government that these claims will not be a proper or possible subject of negotiation between the United State and England and that therefore negotiations would not for a moment be entertained? Do we consider and shall we be prepared to act upon the opinion that with the present arbitration the Alabama controversy will be distinctly and finally closed, and that our self-respect would forbid our being parties to any revival of discussion as to the indirect claims? From the few words we exchanged on the subject I have great hopes that you will yourself be able to reassure me on these points. I cannot tell you how deeply and anxiously I feel the weight of even my small share in the aggregate responsibility of the Cabinet in this crisis, and I hope that you and my colleagues will forgive the wearisome persistency with which I fear I have constantly expressed my view.'

' My dear Goschen,' replied Mr. Gladstone on June 17,<sup>1</sup> 'so far as I am concerned I answer your question without hesitation. Under no circumstances that I am aware of, could or can the indirect claims become the subject of negotiation between the two countries on their merits.

<sup>1</sup> This letter is published, but not in full, in Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone*.

Had the treaty never been made, or after it had been made, had the case not contained them; or thirdly the case having in one sense brought them into the Arbitration, and we having (*ex hypothesi*) got them kicked out again; if under any of these conditions (and no others occur to me) the United States bring or had brought forward the indirect claims, I know of no way of meeting the overture except a firm and unconditional refusal. At the same time I doubt whether the Cabinet can be asked to make these affirmations, inasmuch as, according to my view, they are not within the purview of its present undertaking. That undertaking has reference conclusively to the scope of the Arbitration. We have contended all along that the claims could not legitimately come before the Arbitrators. One of our reasons, in itself conclusive, has been that by the language of the Treaty and the Protocols, they had been extinguished. But we have never demanded the assent of the Americans to our reasoning, only to our conclusion, that the claims were not within the scope of the Arbitration. If indeed their exclusion left them in a better position than they would have stood in if never included there would be a ground for our touching them further. This case would have arisen had we taken what we suppose to be Adams's words. But, those words once withdrawn, there is no such case. It is my view (but this is quite another matter) that they lay cast aside a dishonoured carcass, which no amount of force, fraud, or folly can again galvanise into life. You will see then, in sum (if I rightly understand you), I accept for myself broadly and fully what may be called the extreme doctrine against the indirect claims; but I think the Cabinet cannot fairly be challenged for an official judgment on a matter not really before it. I hope you may be inclined to take the same view. But everyone must appreciate, and none can misapprehend, your honourable and scrupulous anxiety.

'Yours very sincerely,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

In March 1873 the troubles of the Government came to a head in the defeat on the second reading of their Irish University Bill. Received on its introduction with an almost universal chorus of approval, a few weeks of consideration had shown that, for various and opposite reasons, it ran counter to the feelings or prejudices of the Irish hierarchy and of Irish and British Protestantism, as well as to the views of many earnest and thoughtful Liberals below the gangway, such as Professor Fawcett, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice and Mr. Vernon Harcourt.<sup>1</sup> The solid body of Conservatives, led into the lobby by Disraeli, was reinforced by the votes of Irish Catholics and English Radicals, and the second reading, after a debate of four nights, was rejected by a majority of three. Two days later Gladstone resigned. Disraeli, however, declined to form a Government, and Gladstone therefore felt himself compelled, with his colleagues, to resume office. But the blow that had been inflicted on their authority was one from which it was impossible for them completely to recover. And the remaining months of the life of the Gladstone Ministry only served still further to lessen its rapidly weakening hold on popular favour.

Later in the year the embarrassments of Mr. Gladstone increased. During the remainder of the Session (which was to be the last of the Parliament of 1868) great dissatisfaction had been expressed in Parliament with the conduct in their several departments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Postmaster-General and the First Commissioner of Works. This dissatisfaction was shared by the Prime Minister. Lord Ripon, moreover, had resigned, and a partial reconstruction of the Ministry had become necessary. Mr. Lowe was removed from the

<sup>1</sup> The late Rt. Honble. Sir William Vernon Harcourt.

Exchequer to the Home Office, but who should succeed Mr. Lowe? It would seem that Mr. Childers, at the time Chancellor of the Duchy, had some reason for thinking that Mr. Gladstone would invite him to take that post, and that this did not actually happen he attributed to the disapproval expressed by Mr. Lowe himself of such an arrangement.<sup>1</sup> Gladstone, it appears, had thought of Goschen for the post; but, deferring to the wishes of others, he reluctantly consented to become 'Chancellor of the Exchequer himself';<sup>2</sup> a decision fraught with momentous consequences. Thus Goschen remained at the Admiralty till the Ministry fell.

<sup>1</sup> See *Journal of Mrs. Childers*, quoted in *The Life of the Rt. Honble. Hugh Childers*, vol. i. p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii. p. 262.

## CHAPTER IV

### GOSCHEN IN OPPOSITION

MR. GLADSTONE'S impulsive dissolution in 1874 took the world by surprise. Parliament was to meet on February 5, and preparations had been made by both Parties for the coming Session. On January 24 the newspapers published Mr. Gladstone's address to the electors of Greenwich, which was the first intimation to the public of an immediate General Election. A fortnight later it was clear what answer the country was giving to the Prime Minister's appeal, and though the Greenwich electors again returned him to Parliament, a Conservative was at the head of the poll. In the City, Goschen, whose personal popularity had not diminished, suffered from the strong wave of feeling which was running against the Gladstone Ministry, and very nearly lost his seat. He was returned the lowest on the poll of the four successful candidates, three Conservatives being ahead of him. Hitherto the politics of the City had been predominantly Liberal: then and henceforward the City has been strongly Conservative; but men may well differ as to whether this change of political colour indicated a change of political opinion amongst the citizens, or merely that the objects for which political Parties have been since contending have become altogether different from those over which their predecessors had fought.

Various considerations had contributed to Mr. Gladstone's sudden resolution to test the opinion of the country. Much had occurred to weaken the Ministry and to worry its chief. The reconstruction of his Cabinet, and the causes that had made this necessary, had been exceedingly painful to him. The defeat on the Irish University Bill, the consequent resignation of the Government, and Mr. Gladstone's almost forced return to office, had lowered Liberal prestige. The Party was still discredited and hampered by the active discontent of the more militant Dissenters, due to Mr. Forster's Education Act. There were besides immediately impending difficulties connected with Mr. Gladstone's seat at Greenwich, which it was argued with much plausibility had been vacated by his acceptance of office as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Ministry had already suffered a good deal from the charge that it was willing for its own purposes to evade or override constitutional practice and strain the meaning of statutes. The appointment to the Ewelme Rectory, the nomination of the Attorney-General to a Lord Justice-ship of Appeal, the abolition of purchase by Royal Warrant, were in all men's minds, and the country would have listened impatiently to fine-drawn arguments to establish that Mr. Gladstone's assumption of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer had not vacated his seat for Greenwich; for this seemed to ordinary minds to be the effect of the Statute of Anne, and the non-applicability to the case of the fifty-second section of the Reform Act of 1867.

Perhaps, however, the strongest reason of all impelling Mr. Gladstone to act as he did was the insistence of Mr. Goschen and Mr. Cardwell, the heads of the two great spending departments, on their Naval and Military Estimates for the year 1874-75, which their chief considered excessive.

We have seen already that Goschen could not be induced on grounds of economy to diminish the efficiency of the Navy for performing the work allotted to it. On January 17 Mr. Gladstone noted in his diary that the prospects of agreement with the two departments were for the present bad.<sup>1</sup> The following day he first thought of dissolution, and told Bright and Granville. On the 21st he wrote to the Queen advising dissolution, and the next day he addressed a Minute to both Ministers, suggesting 'that the decision on estimates should stand over from next day's Cabinet till they saw their way as to their position, and as to time for their production.' Cardwell and Goschen accepted the suggestion of postponement, though how the favourable result of a General Election would have enabled the Prime Minister and the heads of the two departments to agree upon the amount of the Naval and Military Estimates for 1874-75 it is not easy to see. In all probability many of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues felt that their position had become an impossible one. The sanguine temperament of the Prime Minister doubtless led him to expect a renewed vote of confidence from the electorate; but some of the Ministers, it may well be believed, saw more clearly, and were ready to welcome immediate defeat at the hands of the electorate as being on the whole preferable to a prolongation of the existence of a discredited and inharmonious Ministry. There was, at all events, no dissent at the Cabinet of January 23 to the proposed dissolution, nor to the policy of abolishing the income tax, a matter which, strangely enough, seems never to have been submitted for their serious and deliberate consideration.

George Goschen was an ardent Liberal, as Liberalism was understood in those days. His address to the electors

<sup>1</sup> Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone*.

of the City, and his speeches on the eve of the elections, were those of a strong Party man. Yet in everything that he wrote or uttered there rang the note of an individualism amply sufficient to prove that he could never be accounted a mere 'item' (to use an expression much in vogue a dozen years later) in Party reckoning. His career had already shown that he took no mere surface view of the larger political issues before the country; that he had studied deeply the merits of political questions, that he was a master of detail, and that his political conclusions were those not of an ambitious self-seeker but of a conscientious and patriotic statesman. He was now entering on a new phase of parliamentary life. He had been eleven years in the House of Commons, and though for more than two of them he had sat on the Speaker's left hand, it was now for the first time that he was a member of a defeated Party—a Party which was in a minority both in the House and in the country, whose disorganisation and want of harmony seemed to indicate that many years would elapse before it returned to power.

The Party tables had indeed been turned by the General Election of 1874. The older Radicals, who, a generation or two earlier had believed that a wider franchise with secret voting would open up a Liberal millennium, would have been not a little astounded had it been foretold to them that the first General Election under the ballot, with household franchise established in the boroughs, would result in one of the greatest victories ever won by the Conservative Party. That Party had not really been in power since the break up of Sir Robert Peel's majority in the great struggle for Free Trade. What *was* modern Conservatism? Was it really as retrograde as Whigs and Radicals declared? Protection as a policy had long been abandoned by Disraeli and every Conservative statesman.

The country had rejected Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals; but at first it hardly knew what to expect from modern Toryism, and the gifted yet singular being in whom, almost to its own surprise, it had now voted confidence.

In the meantime the blow to Goschen and his friends was a stunning one. On the Tuesday after the poll Mrs. Goschen wrote to her mother-in-law describing how she had sat waiting at 66 Mount Street, 'with Maude and George' (her eldest children), hardly less nervous and excited than herself, on the fatal Friday evening for the result. How different from the joyful confidence with which at two previous contests she had waited for the announcement of victory! To be last on the poll was a sharp disappointment,

'but George is in *lower* spirits about the *chaos* in the Party than about himself. Gladstone is very down. We dined there on Saturday. He was quiet and resigned, but sad, and she *very* sad. She told me she had lived in a fool's paradise, and never doubted but that he would come in again. . . . It is so sad that in his last great days he should have fallen so suddenly from the pedestal of five years ago. We feel more for him than for anyone else. And then the horrid lies that have been told . . . it makes one sick that so-called gentlemen should invent such things. . . . We heard a rumour that perhaps Gathorne-Hardy<sup>1</sup> will be at the Admiralty. George would like this as he is a sensible man and a true gentleman' ;

and she goes on to speak of the deep regret felt at the Admiralty by permanent officials and by admirals, captains and lieutenants, both on their own account and on that of the Service, at the loss of so admirable a First Lord.

The letters Goschen received at this time from men already recognised as at the head of their profession, or

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards first Earl of Cranbrook. His daughter married Goschen's eldest son in 1892.

destined soon to become so, testify to the confidence with which he had inspired all ranks of the Service. The Party sympathies of his correspondents of course differed ; but one sentiment prevailed amongst them *as sailors*, whose first and strongest feeling was the good of the Navy. After expressing the universal regret of all classes of officers, Captain Glyn, Flag-Captain at Portsmouth, writes to him :

‘ I can assure you no First Lord in my time leaves office so regretted or who has made so many friends. This extends to the most rabid and now triumphant of the Conservatives of the Service. I don’t say this to flatter you, but it’s *the real truth*. Coming into office as you did at the most trying time with the most uphill game to play you have won the esteem and respect of all in the Service. . . . I know the difficulties you inherited. . . . and when you came in, circumstances were against us. We were, as it were, under a cloud of public displeasure ; but you have always so nobly associated yourself with the Service and spoken so admirably for it and of it, that you have quite won all the blue-jacket hearts, and one of your chief satisfactions must be that what you said so often in public has been proved so true and never did the Navy come out better than in the late advance on the Prah. Nothing can exceed the *esprit-de-corps*, and the way that force sent out under your supervision and direction has met all expectations, and had there been more fighting would have come out even stronger. This zeal and discipline has quite won Sir G. Wolseley, and he has nobly responded by giving them the post of honour. . . . I thought you ought to feel what is felt for you.’<sup>1</sup>

Another distinguished officer, Admiral Hornby, at that time in command of the Channel Squadron, writes from H.M.S. *Agincourt*, then at Lisbon, that since he had served under Goschen his chief business had been with the *personnel* of the Fleets.

<sup>1</sup> Private. H.M.S. *Duke of Wellington*, Portsmouth, February 24, 1874.

'I hope I may be allowed to testify to the gratifying way in which I have seen it improve since it has been under your control. I have seen it fall very low; and that was a grievous thing to one who loves it as I do. I now see it brought up very nearly to its best level; and I and all others who are interested in it will ever feel grateful to you and to the others under whom its restoration has been effected.'

A third—Sir William Houston Stewart, Admiral of the Fleet:

'I declare to you *honestly* as a sailor, and one of those now at the top of the tree, that I have looked with admiration and increasing confidence to your management of the noble Profession, to the pains you have taken to acquire an accurate knowledge of its nature, and real interests, and to the uniform courtesy and consideration with which you have treated its officers of all ranks. The result of the election is of course very bitter to an old man born and bred in Liberal principles; but there is one important alleviation to my distress. *You* are still in Parliament, and will, I am confident, ably and zealously sustain the claims of the Navy to be maintained in efficiency and contentment.'

One-and-twenty years afterwards Goschen was to return to the Admiralty to dedicate all his energies till the close of his official life to the service of that great profession whose welfare he had so deeply at heart, whose high spirit he shared, and which had always responded so keenly to the sympathy and firm guidance characteristic of his rule.

The nation, wearied by the reforming zeal of the previous Ministry, now longed for repose, and it is therefore natural enough that the Administration of Mr. Disraeli should have left behind it no records of heroic legislation. Nevertheless, under his *régime*, several very useful Acts were placed upon the Statute Book. In the short Session

of 1874 it looked at first as if the Conservative majority, which was now overwhelming in both Houses of the Legislature, would use its power to undo the work of the preceding Parliament. The Act for overhauling the endowed schools and rendering them more useful to the nation at large was threatened by extreme Party men in the supposed interest of the Church; and Bruce's Licensing Act of 1872 was not less threatened in that of the publicans. But Mr. Disraeli, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. Cross and a considerable body of men of moderate opinions were little in sympathy with a policy of reaction, and no retrograde steps were taken. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer enjoyed the benefit of Mr. Gladstone's magnificent surplus, which enabled him to reduce the income tax to twopence, the lowest point at which it has stood since it was imposed by Sir Robert Peel, and to abolish what was left of the sugar duty; but the debates in the House, and discussion outside, did not show that general opinion was tending to favour Mr. Gladstone's policy of completely extinguishing the income tax. In the year 1874 extinction was at least possible; but this can hardly be said of any subsequent year, and the whole trend of our financial policy since then, especially of Liberal policy, has been to place ever-increasing reliance on the income tax as the mainstay of our annual revenue.

Mr. Gladstone himself, hurt at the defection of his Party, and little in sympathy with many of his political friends as to subjects then claiming a passing interest, such as the Public Worship Bill for England, and the Abolition of Patronage Bill for Scotland, had become very irregular in his attendance at the House. Sometimes one of his late colleagues, sometimes another, would take the chief place for his Party in debate. Mr. James Lowther<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The late Right Hon. James Lowther, Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1867.

had amused the House by describing Mr. Goschen, on the occasion of a slave trade debate, as 'one of the Commissioners for exercising the office of Leader of the Opposition'; a remark which the *Times* perhaps even bettered, by comparing the relation of ex-Ministers *inter se* with that of candidates at a competitive examination. Mr. Gladstone, as soon as the elections had made clear the verdict of the country, had written to his brother at Liverpool that he did not intend 'to assume the general function of Leader of the Opposition,' but hoped rather to spend his remaining days 'in tranquillity and freedom from political strife';<sup>1</sup> and a few days later he informed the last meeting of his Cabinet of his determination. He was, however, persuaded to delay for a time any public announcement of his contemplated withdrawal. It is hardly surprising that amongst his former colleagues and in the House, and in the country also, the absence of definite and ever-present leadership was felt to tell heavily against the prospects of the Liberal Party.

For a considerable time before the grand crash of the General Election in January and February 1874, a good deal of uneasiness had been felt as to the future of the Liberal Party amongst active and prominent supporters of Mr. Gladstone. Goschen, as we have seen, held views of his own, and was ultimately at issue with his chief as to the financial requirements of the Navy; and though in complete agreement with the general direction of the policy pursued as regards our foreign relations, he was by no means satisfied that the conduct of foreign affairs had been sufficiently firm and decided. Neither the *Alabama* Arbitration nor the Black Sea Treaty could at

<sup>1</sup> Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii. Letter to Mr. Robertson Gladstone, February 6, 1874.

the time possibly be looked upon as triumphs of British statesmanship or diplomacy; though certainly posterity, with ampler knowledge, and power of looking before and after, passes upon those proceedings a judgment very different from the vigorous and sweeping condemnation of much contemporary opinion. The determined neutrality of Great Britain throughout the Franco-German war had kept it a duel between the two combatants. It cannot be doubted that the policy of neutrality was right and wise; but such a policy seldom wins friends, and often, when a war is over, the neutral finds that his attitude has brought upon him sentiments of equal hostility from both parties to the struggle. According to the well-worn phrase, 'We were without a friend in Europe.'

'The Government had pursued a policy,' said Mr. Goschen on one occasion in loyal support of the Ministry, 'which was called a policy of isolation; but it had at all events been a policy of unselfishness from end to end; and he believed there were many countries in Europe which would prefer the disinterested neutrality of England to the sinister policy of some continental States.'

And he protested against the habit of national self-depreciation and of decrying our own influence and power in the world, which at certain seasons seems to give so much satisfaction to Englishmen.<sup>1</sup> Already in the autumn of 1873 a feeling that changes were coming in the Liberal Party was in the air.

'I should particularly like,' writes Mr. Gladstone from Hawarden Castle on September 24, replying to an invitation from the Goschens to Seacox Heath, 'an opportunity of free conversation with you on the future of the Country and

<sup>1</sup> Speech of Mr. Goschen at the Easter Monday Banquet at the Mansion House.—*Times*, April 11, 1871.

the Liberal party, in a large tract of which future you are likely to have a great and distinguished interest.'

The extreme Radicalism and supposed tendency towards Republicanism of Sir Charles Dilke, who appeared to be likely some day to lead the more democratic section of public opinion, were frightening the moderate element in the Liberal Party. For many of the latter the pace of the reformers had been too hot, and they wished to return to what they regarded as 'old Liberal principles'—the steady, sober advance of the Whigs.

Mr. William Vernon Harcourt at Oxford on December 13 enunciated and expounded the views of the Whigs. It was his first Parliament, but before entering political life he had already made a name at the parliamentary Bar, and won distinction as a writer on international law. Ambitious of a political career, he had sacrificed a professional income of £10,000 a year to enter the House of Commons,<sup>1</sup> and now for four years he had occupied a seat below the gangway, showing much ability as well as independence of speech and action, especially in the debates on the Government Education and Irish University Bills. Recognising his ability and prudently anxious to withdraw as far as possible the brains from 'below the gangway,' Mr. Gladstone had made him his Solicitor-General under Sir Henry James, who had just succeeded Coleridge as Attorney-General. This speech to his constituents, made on his re-election after his acceptance of office, he forwarded to Goschen, 'in hopes of convincing him that people don't change their opinions when they change their seats,' referring to his migration to the Front Bench. Too much time, he thought, was spent in the House of Commons over useless and even vexatious

<sup>1</sup> This he told me himself a year or two before he entered Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet—A. D. E.

legislation ; too little given to the consideration of good administration. 'Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform' remained the old watchwords of the Party ; but if war establishments were maintained in time of peace there could be no 'retrenchment,' and by 'reform' he did not understand the continual taking to pieces and reconstruction of our constitutional system. It was too soon to be again contemplating changes in the franchise and redistribution of seats.

The difference of opinion between the Prime Minister and the heads of the two great spending departments was a principal cause, as has been seen, of the sudden dissolution of 1874, and here, at all events, the sympathies of Sir William Harcourt went strongly with Mr. Gladstone. The Army and Navy Estimates for 1874-75 were framed by the departments, approved and submitted by Cardwell and Goschen to the Cabinet, but not as yet definitely sanctioned by the Prime Minister and his colleagues. Then came the General Election and the change of Government, and it became the duty of the Disraeli Administration to lay the estimates for the coming year, proposed by its predecessor, before the new House of Commons. Who was to be responsible to Parliament for these estimates ? Early in April Sir William Harcourt, with Sir Wilfrid Lawson and many other Liberals, voted against the Cardwell estimates, which, be it said, showed an increase on former years. Gladstone had written to Sir William Harcourt on April 1, after consultation with Granville, a letter disclaiming his own responsibility and that of the Cabinet for estimates which they had never approved.

'Preparation in the departments is made on the assumptions of the departmental officers ; but even the Head of the Department is not individually committed until he makes known his views to the Cabinet which is supreme, and which

alters the estimates (rarely if ever increasing them) as it may think fit. The estimates must therefore be judged on their own merits and on the credit of the Government producing them. For myself, I might go further, but it is needless and not to the purpose; I could not speak for others and for the plain reason that the estimates were not discussed in the Cabinet.

This letter did not reach Sir William Harcourt till after he had voted, without having been prompted so to do from headquarters, but simply from his own constant desire to keep Army Estimates low. What did all this mean? asked Sir William Harcourt of Goschen.

'Is it the fact that the late Cabinet are going in against the estimates, or G. alone—or what? Does it mean that with these estimates the "speculative" surplus of five millions cannot be justified in spite of preternatural growth from the revenue? Is it to be said that when Parliament was dissolved and the repeal of the income tax imminent the Cabinet had not yet determined on the expenditure and therefore could not calculate their surplus. If so, what will prudent people think.'

And he goes on to ask Goschen for some enlightenment. Harcourt's own course had been quite clear, intelligible and straightforward. He was, of course, in no way responsible for these estimates, which he had never seen. In December last he had informed Bright that if the Army Estimates amounted to the figures now shown, he would resign his office. He had no desire, he says, to cut down Navy Estimates, his 'theory having always been to spend a little more on the Navy and a good deal less on the Army.' But he felt that mutual understanding was desirable, both as regards action on the estimates and on the coming Budget. After receiving Goschen's answer Harcourt replied to him, on April 9, that he had almost been led to suppose Gladstone's letter was

‘an emanation of the wisdom of that junto of which we hear so much and know so little—the late Cabinet. That, however, it is clear from your letter is not so. I suppose therefore it is an edict of a yet more inner Cabinet.’

All of which is strong confirmation of Lord Morley’s view that the dissolution of 1874 was *primarily* due to difference of opinion between the Prime Minister and at least two of his principal colleagues as to the provision to be made for Army and Navy in the estimates of 1874–75. The incident illustrates also the want of harmony amongst Liberals during those years.

At the end of the year Sir William Harcourt again spoke at Oxford, and on lines of moderate Liberalism. ‘You will see,’ he writes to Goschen on December 29, ‘I have been preaching Whig doctrine *pur et simple*. They are my principles and I mean to stick to them *coûte que coûte*.’ And a week later (January 5, 1875) he was rejoicing at the way his speech had been received, ‘for it had pleased those it was meant to please and had riled those it was meant to rile. . . .’ In public speeches, and in private letters and talk, Harcourt in vigorous language was as a sound Whig protesting against the dangerous courses into which Mr. Gladstone seemed likely to lead the Liberal Party.

On January 7 Harcourt writes again very fully. Goschen and he, he thinks, would probably not agree as to the mismanagement of the Liberal Party in the late Parliament; but he rejoiced that for a couple of years before the catastrophe of the General Election he, at least, had lost no opportunity of protesting in public and in private against the mistakes that were being made.

‘If Gladstone returns as leader my course will depend on the policy which he pursues. I am a little sick of what Glyn called “loyalty,” which as far as I understand was a

servile abandonment of all principles to the whim of an individual. That sort of *loyalty* I hope I shall never practise. My loyalty is due to the principles of the party to which I belong. And I can neither see them dragged through the dirt nor suffer myself to be so. If it be true, as is confidently stated, that Gladstone is to return in order to make a declaration against the Church, and you and your late colleagues think that even if you disapprove such a course you have not the right to say so; I can only protest that I do not so regard my political obligations, nor should I do so if the leader was a far wiser man than Mr. Gladstone is. I shall take on that subject the same course as I did on his Resolutions. It seems to me impossible in any man who respects himself, to hold his political opinions as a sort of tenant at will, ready to be ejected at an instant's notice. It was in my opinion this singular doctrine of "loyalty" (which I should call by another name) which deprived the late Cabinet of that independence of judgment and freedom of consultation which is essential to the dignity and vitality of a Government. A party or a Cabinet which only meets to register submissively the varying fancies of an individual, without daring even to remonstrate or to discuss, is sure to perish as the Empire of Louis Napoleon did and as the Government of Gladstone has done. I know something of the way in which the Cabinet of Lord Palmerston was conducted when Sir G. C. Lewis was a member of it. In those days Cabinet Ministers dared to have opinions of their own, and frequently made them prevail; but . . . I desire the right to act just as independently as Gladstone himself did towards the Government of Lord Palmerston from 1854-59, after he had been his colleague and indeed had accepted office under him. If Gladstone will stick to the principles of the Liberal Party I am very ready to act with him or under him. But I will not undertake to support any wild proposals which his flighty nature may at any time think fit to go in for. Still less will I abandon the right of remonstrance against a policy which I regret as

dangerous or mischievous—like that for instance of the late pamphlet. He has the secret unknown to me of justifying himself in doing and saying one day the exact opposite of what he did the day before. As I don't understand the art I shall not follow that course. And I am sincerely sorry for others who, like yourself, think yourselves bound to go where the will o' the wisp may lead you. I hope you may not be choked in the quagmire. If Gladstone flings himself into the arms of the Radicals he cannot expect that moderate men will follow him. . . . However, we will talk over all this at Seacox Heath. Meanwhile I can go to sleep more easily than you can who do not know that you may not see in any morning's *Times* a manifesto or a pamphlet which will bind you like the Vatican Decrees to obey your Pope and declare for the destruction of the Monarchy, the House of Lords or the House of Commons (as he has no longer a majority there) and the Church.

‘Happily however as in the case of the Papists the “loyalty” even of the late Cabinet is not so unreasonable as it professes to be, and I firmly believe that you would think three times at least before you killed your wife and family even at the command of Gladstone and G. Glyn.’

‘So Gladstone has given up the lead,’ writes Childers on February 20, 1874, to his wife; ‘and Cardwell’s going to the Peers leaves the lead to be settled with Lowe, Forster, and Goschen. I dare say it may be Goschen, unless Whitbread<sup>1</sup> should be equal to it,’<sup>2</sup>

—rather a curious comment on the probabilities to come from one so well informed as Mr<sup>2</sup> Childers and so intimate with the Liberal Leader and Party. It was mainly Forster’s responsibility for the Education Act which was fatal to his assuming the leadership of a Party where the zeal of the

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Whitbread, M.P. for Bedford.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of the Rt. Hon. Hugh Childers*, by Lieut.-Col. Spencer Childers.

Dissenters had always counted for much. Mr. Forster considered that his colleagues had left him to bear alone the odium of a policy which was that of Mr. Gladstone and the Cabinet as well as of himself. However that may have been, there seems to have existed in Mr. Gladstone's mind, and perhaps in those of his colleagues, a feeling that Mr. Forster did not quite make common cause with them when difficulty arose, and was too much addicted to playing an individual part. Later in the same Session Mr. Gladstone wrote (June 17, 1874) to Goschen deplored Mr. Forster's political conduct.

' It is one of the most painful incidents of public life that a man finds himself sometimes obliged to differ openly and decidedly from his friends and coadjutors. But I wonder that a fine one like Forster, so upright, so manly, and so kind, should not have been struck by the fact that this has now happened three times in the last five or six weeks, and that occasions of high conviction do not naturally come so thick. That he thought each and all of them such I do not doubt, but I wonder he did not a little suspect his judgment. I have some title to say this among ourselves, for I myself stayed away from the division on the suffrage, on which I am both entirely convinced and much committed, for no other reason than out of deference for friends, of whom I think I was told Forster was one. Mr. de Vere (since turned Roman) told me some 35 or 40 years ago, in speaking of the clergy of the Church of Ireland (with which he was connected) and their Roman rivals, that they were a small mob fighting against a huge army. Is this to be our condition? In the last Parliament we were at any rate a large mob against a small army.'

Gladstone did not, however, actually resign the leadership till January 1875, though his intention to do so had been known to his colleagues for nearly a year past. In

expectation of the rumoured change there had been much talk in political circles as to future arrangements, with the result that in general opinion at the opening of 1875 the only possible candidates for the succession were Lord Hartington, Forster and Goschen. When Mr. Gladstone's letter to Lord Granville (January 13, 1875) was made public it became necessary to take immediate steps, and a meeting of Liberal Members of Parliament was therefore summoned at the Reform Club for February 3. In the meantime various friends wrote to Goschen. Mr. Gladstone was not to be persuaded to withdraw his resignation.

'I know nothing,' he said in a letter to Goschen from Hawarden, dated January 16, 'that gives me such a sense of weakness as an occasion of some decisive resolution about myself. I wish that for such occasions the Pope were infallible and I were the Pope.<sup>1</sup> But I have a firm conviction of being right. Weak and faint hope of service, fear of miscarriages, horror of breach, as well as that apprehension of a lengthened engagement which Halifax seemed to me to admit, almost against his will, are motives of which I think none can deny the gravity. . . . You are all exceedingly kind and I am very grateful.'

On January 27 Sir Thomas Acland writes: 'he had long looked forward to Forster and you as the men, either of whom were fit to guide us in Parliament and speak for us,' and he declined to think of anyone else. Stansfield, who would have preferred Hartington, thought Forster would win. Lowe, on the other hand, writes<sup>2</sup> in pungent style that if he does,

'I will not sit on the front bench. It is deplorable that

<sup>1</sup> These were the days of Mr. Gladstone's fierce denunciation of 'Vaticanism.'

<sup>2</sup> Lowe to Goschen, January 23, 1875.

the question should have been on his having offended the Nonconformists. He ought never to have been thought of for the place which he was. No one qualification except bad manners and inferior education. I think Granville did quite wrong in countenancing a meeting. I understood that everyone was against it, and I have told him so. It would produce much mischief, if much mischief were left to be done. The certain effect of Forster's success would be a fresh breach in the party.'

Before the meeting at the Reform Club took place it was pretty well ascertained that Lord Hartington would be the choice of a great majority of the Party, but it was known that he was very unwilling to take up the burden which Mr. Gladstone had laid down. 'I cannot,' writes Lord Granville (January 17) to Goschen, 'answer for Hartington's acceptance, if the choice falls upon him; but I am sure he would refuse unless there was hearty co-operation.' At the urgent solicitation of Mr. Gladstone, and in accordance with the general desire of the Party, Lord Hartington was prevailed upon to accept the leadership. Mr. Forster stood aside, and when the meeting at the Reform Club came off, Lord Hartington was unanimously chosen as Mr. Gladstone's successor, to lead the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons. No one rejoiced more in this result than Goschen himself, for he then and always held in the highest estimation those qualities of character and brain which won for Lord Hartington, in a very unusual degree, the respect and confidence of his countrymen.

It was in 1877 that Goschen felt himself compelled to speak out against the project of the assimilation of the county and borough franchise, a subject which Mr. George Trevelyan had annually brought before the House of Commons either by way of resolution or Bill. Whilst

the Liberals were in office, and the Government was indisposed to take up parliamentary reform, the matter was debated in rather academic fashion, everyone knowing that neither debate nor division would have any immediate practical result. But after Disraeli had assumed office the question became of far greater importance. It no longer served merely as an opportunity for advanced Liberals to display their zeal for reform. Official Liberalism was now free, and it soon became clear that household franchise in the counties would be before long incorporated in the programme of the Party, to be given effect to whenever that Party should obtain a majority. For some time there was a natural indisposition amongst many Liberals to plunge the country into the turmoil of constitutional reform so soon after the settlement of 1868. Difference of opinion existed on the Front Opposition Bench, and, as a consequence, till 1877 the majority of its occupants, when a division was called, had walked out of the House. In that year, however, Lord Hartington, the Leader of the Opposition, spoke and voted for reform, whilst the only Liberals who opposed it in the lobby were Goschen, Lowe, and Lord Charles Bruce. As his line of action on this matter had considerable effect on Goschen's future career, it is desirable to understand his exact position with regard to it.

As we have seen, Goschen was an ardent supporter in 1866 of the unsuccessful Reform Bill of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone. In 1867 a far more democratic measure of reform was passed by Mr. Disraeli and the Conservatives. The rivalry and competition of Parties had resulted in the passing into law of a Franchise Bill far more extensive than nine-tenths of the House of Commons in their hearts desired or approved, and outside Parliament there was some natural uneasiness in the public mind as to the results which would flow from

it. In these circumstances Anthony Trollope, at the end of the Session of 1867, asked Goschen to write an article on the political situation for the first number of *St. Paul's Magazine*, of which he had become editor. Millais had been secured to illustrate it and several eminent men of letters to contribute to it, and in the middle of October *St. Paul's* started upon what was expected to be a brilliant career. It contained an anonymous article—‘The Leap in the Dark’—which obtained a good deal of notice. This was followed up in the second number (in November) by an article—‘The New Electors.’ Both of these articles were written by Goschen, who was anxious to preserve his anonymity. Since, however, the editor confesses to him that ‘George Glyn’ was aware of the authorship, and that he was staying with Mr. Gladstone, to whom Trollope had sent a copy of the magazine, the authorship must in some quarters have very early leaked out.

In his first article Goschen sets himself to consider why so sweeping a measure had been passed, and what it really all meant.

‘Ministers had declared their readiness to leave reform in the hands of the House, and to substitute parliamentary impatience for Ministerial responsibility as the motive power for carrying the Bill.’ Members wanted to get the question settled and out of the way. ‘Public opinion, in the sense in which the word is so often used,—the conversation of men whom one meets in the streets every day, was really indifferent.’ Yet in truth and fact ‘a change was being made in Parliament by which such a transfer of power was accomplished, as was never made in any country, except under pressure of a revolution.’ He goes on: ‘Logically, theoretically, *à priori*, the Reform Bill is nothing less than a revolution. Practically and actually the vast majority of Englishmen have shown that they believe it to be a slight

modification of our representative system which it was politic to make, in order to satisfy somewhat importunate demands, but which was scarcely worth all the fuss that a set of professional politicians chose to make about the matter.'

'People did not realise,' Goschen thought, 'what it is to be afraid of parliamentary action.' They had, from their experience of Parliament in recent years, come to consider it a humdrum, useful machine. *Laissez-faire* was the accepted principle, and financial business had consisted chiefly in taking off taxes. Other questions, such as a rivalry between national education and clerical ascendancy, would no doubt continue to create Party cleavage.

'The country is not yet in favour of secular as against religious education, and the vast majority would still prefer that timely concession and mutual forbearance might render arrangements possible, under which religious instruction would continue to form an important element of every school. . . . But the country must not be driven to choose between the two—between improved popular education on the one hand, and the maintenance of denominational education on the other. It is certain which of the two in that case would have to go to the wall.'

In his second article Goschen ponders over the probable characteristics of the newly enfranchised electors. They would give a more manly tone to our foreign policy; but he entirely disagreed with Disraeli in the belief that they would help Conservatism, however loyal they might be to our great national institutions. The new electors he expected to return 'representatives more Liberal all through,' rather than men Liberal only in three or four big questions, but who otherwise sympathise with

Conservatives. Electors would be less inclined to *laissez-faire*, less regardful of political economy.

Goschen's anticipations are so interesting in the light of subsequent events that it is desirable to give his summing-up in his own words.

'We believe that the new electorate will on the whole throw most of their weight on to the most Liberal side of the Liberal Party; that they will attribute an importance to sentimental questions which these questions have not hitherto been able to secure; that, as at home they will demand greater respect for the susceptibilities of their class, so abroad they will support rather the "cosmopolitan" than the dynastic element, and on condition of our foreign policy falling in with their sympathies, will be more ready to fight than existing constituencies; that in social questions they will require more vigorous action, a fiercer warfare against abuses, more Government interference; that in economical matters they will be less faithful to political economy; that in future they will be on the side of trade, rather than that of land; of direct, rather than of indirect taxation; that they will be less chary of touching vested rights, and more exacting as to public utility; and that there may even be a tendency to take a somewhat different view of the right definition of National prosperity. An immense responsibility will rest on those Liberals whose strength the Reform Bill has most tended to increase.'

Goschen totally disbelieved in the Conservatism of 'the residuum.' He expected that the new electorate would create a new kind of parliamentary opinion. Still, he looked forward, on the whole, with hope, though not unmixed with anxiety, to the future.

'We firmly believe,' he wrote in conclusion, 'that the accession of vigour and new blood, the appreciation of the wants and feelings of millions of our fellow-subjects, the revelations on matters of which the majority of present

electors are necessarily ignorant, the extension of sympathy with our form of government which must result from the admission of many hundred thousands of voters belonging to a class which had hitherto few accredited channels for making its wishes known, will vastly increase the usefulness and the authority of Parliament, while the classes who have hitherto exclusively wielded political power will still retain ample strength to prevent their being overwhelmed by numbers on any question where they have right and justice on their side.'

For ten years after this Goschen maintained silence on the subject of further parliamentary reform, whilst it was annually pushed to the front by Sir George Trevelyan, Sir Charles Dilke, Professor Fawcett and Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice. In 1875, however, he made a partial departure from this attitude in supporting a motion for inquiring into better methods of securing a more complete representation of the people, and he took the opportunity of expressing his dislike to the system of minority representation, even though to that system he owed his seat. But when, in 1877, Lord Hartington and the Front Opposition Bench, with the exception of himself and Lowe, declared for reform, Goschen recognised that the question had become one of the utmost practical importance, and his strong sense of duty compelled him, at whatever sacrifice of personal interest, to oppose to the utmost of his power Sir George Trevelyan's resolutions. His speech (June 29, 1877) was a very remarkable one, and attracted much attention throughout the country. That speech was, moreover, a turning-point in his political career. Henceforward, for many a long year to come, there was a certain aloofness on his part from mere Party strivings. His attitude became one of considerable independence, which, though it was

incompatible with his own upward progress in the official hierarchy of the Party, perhaps gave added weight to his personal influence in the country.

Why, Goschen was asked, should he sacrifice himself in opposing the 'inevitable'? It was inevitable, he fully admitted,

'in its widest form and with its largest effects, if both parties in the House confined themselves to watching each other, in order to see that one might not steal a march on the other, in winning the affections of the class to be enfranchised.'

That was the very thing that made it incumbent on hitherto silent people to speak out. There were two considerations that weighed heavily with him. The rural householders had not had the advantage of those in towns of experience in local government, such as he himself had tried while President of the Local Government Board to give them. Secondly, there was 'the plague spot of the poor laws,' upon which the class to be enfranchised was specially dependent. With a new million of voters 'even a Conservative Government would have to pass a democratic budget,' and he ran through the list of recent legislative and financial measures in order to show that, even with the existing enlarged electorate, it was the newly enfranchised classes who had been especially favoured in legislation and at the same time financially spared. Already he had noticed a change in the House of Commons.

'It might be an unpopular thing to say it, but Political Economy had been dethroned in that House and Philanthropy had been allowed to take its place. Political Economy was the bugbear of the working classes, and philanthropy, he was sorry to say, was their idol. In all legislative assemblies wherever numbers and numbers alone

had prevailed, the doctrines of political economy had never taken root.'

Modern Radicalism differed much, he went on to urge, from the Radicalism of former times. Nowadays Government was expected to lay its hand on every trade, to remedy abuses, and to adjust the relations between capital and labour ; in short, Parliament was to do what older Radicals and political economists thought that men should do for themselves.

' It was the teaching of history that the reign of numbers endangered not the Throne, not the Constitution, not Property—these were all bugbears—but Political Economy and the teaching that made Englishmen self-reliant.'

In so speaking Goschen felt keenly the painfulness of disagreement with old political friends. A more courageous speech, said Lord Hartington later in the debate, had never been made in the House of Commons. And then the Liberal Leader, in his own weighty and common-sense fashion, gave the reasons which led him to the conclusion opposite to that of Goschen, viz. that the time had now come for removing the anomalies and inequalities of the existing system, and for founding the representation of the people as a whole on the general basis of household suffrage.

In the following Session (February 1878) the resolutions were again brought forward and supported by the whole Liberal Party, with the exception of Goschen and Lowe. The former spoke unwillingly, but was forced up by the challenge thrown out to him. He therefore did not attempt to do more than re-affirm his speech of the year before, both as to the dangers he feared, and as to his reading of some of the results of the last Reform Act. It might have increased the number of Conservatives ; but it had,

nevertheless, in his belief, weakened real Conservatism. The opinions he expressed had been formed after mature consideration. They were strongly held, and he did not for a moment conceal from himself the serious consequences which his attitude of independence towards Party ends might produce on his political future. Patriotism and self-respect combined compelled him to speak out boldly in the House of Commons the truth as he felt it on this all-important question, and here, as on many other occasions, his speeches, apart from their effect upon the ultimate issue, tended in no small degree to raise the whole tone of debate, and to keep before Parliament and the country considerations and reasonings of a somewhat higher kind than do duty in the ordinary sparrings of contending factions.

## CHAPTER V

### EGYPT

DURING the preceding Government of Mr. Gladstone the main interest of the country had been centred in home affairs. Under Lord Beaconsfield it was no longer so. In the winter of 1875-76 the insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina against Turkish rule had given warning to the statesmen of Europe that once again the racial and religious antipathies, the national fears and ambitions which constitute the Eastern Question, were breaking into fresh life, and might easily lead to a disturbance of the general peace. In the early summer of 1876 the friendly relations hitherto existing between Great Britain and Turkey were shaken to their foundations by the revelation of the 'Bulgarian Atrocities.' Mr. Gladstone, with passionate vehemence, placed himself at the head of an anti-Turkish and pro-Russian agitation, which threatened to carry all before it till the progress of the Russian arms in Turkey, and the impending danger to Constantinople itself, recalled Englishmen, none too soon, to attend to those 'British interests' at which for a time it had been the fashion for over-excited partisans to scoff. In 1877 and 1878, whilst franchise resolutions were as usual brought before the House of Commons, the thoughts of men in Parliament and in the country, little occupied with parliamentary reform,

were almost wholly absorbed by the troubles in the east of Europe, the advance of Russian armies, and the movement of British fleets.

Goschen from his early years was, as we have seen, always much interested in foreign politics, always deeply concerned that his country should take an honourable and worthy part in the maintenance of European peace, in the safeguarding of British interests, and in the upholding—so far as was possible—of right and justice amongst the nations. His visit to Egypt in the early part of 1876 was not directly connected with politics, though it was almost certain to be followed by important political results. In April creditors of Egypt of every description received an unpleasant shock when it was announced that the Khedive had suspended payment of his Treasury Bills. Under the rule of Ismail Pasha, Egypt was on the verge of bankruptcy, and it had become urgently necessary for that ruler to make, if possible, some sort of arrangement with his foreign creditors. Egyptian Stock was held for the most part in France and in England, and the Council of Foreign Bondholders were anxious to send out trusted and competent representatives to negotiate on their behalf with the Khedive. In May, by Khedivial decree, a Commission of the Public Debt was constituted, to which, however, the British Government, though invited, had declined to send a commissioner. Under these circumstances, Goschen early in July received a letter from the secretary to the Council of Foreign Bondholders in London stating the necessity of protecting English interests during the then crisis in Egyptian finance, and assuring him that in the general opinion this important and delicate business ‘could be intrusted to no abler hands than his.’ Goschen replied next day (July 4) stipulating that he would only undertake

to represent the interests of the English bondholders on the condition that he had the cordial support of all parties, that his position was to be entirely honorary, that no paid agents should be employed—that is, ‘that no money should be made by anybody out of the protection of the interests of English bondholders’—that his duties should not interfere with his perfect freedom of political action or require him to recommend steps, even in the interest of the bondholders, which he might deem politically inexpedient, and, finally, that he would not undertake under any circumstances to go to Egypt. However, towards the end of September Goschen received from the Viceroy an urgent request to come to Egypt and examine on the spot the whole situation, and the possibilities of the financial state of the country, in order that some arrangement might be come to compatible with the Egyptian Budget, and having regard to the claims of the bondholders. Goschen’s examination of affairs during the past two months had greatly interested and impressed him. He realised that ‘the interests involved were enormous, the situation extremely critical, and that vast misery would be caused in England, Scotland and Ireland by any decided act of bankruptcy on the part of Egypt.’ Therefore, though very unwilling to leave England at a time of great political interest, he acceded to the unanimous request of the Egyptian bondholders at a meeting held under the presidency of the Right Hon. E. P. Bouverie, chairman of the Council of the Foreign Bondholders, and a few days later Goschen was on his way to Cairo accompanied by M. Joubert, who was deputed in a similar fashion to safeguard the interests of the French bondholders.<sup>1</sup>

The country in itself he found richer than he had anticipated; but the financial maladministration and fraud were

<sup>1</sup> Report of meeting of bondholders, October 3, 1876.—*Times*.

far greater than anything he had been led to expect. Ismail Sadyk, the Finance Minister, was himself deeply implicated. Arrested by the Viceroy's own hand during Goschen's visit and charged with treason, he was sent into exile, and mysteriously disappeared.<sup>1</sup> It was suggested at a later day that the Minister's disgrace was due to his opposition to the policy of Messrs. Goschen and Joubert, and the foreign influence they brought to bear against him. As a matter of fact, neither the British nor the French Consul-General, nor Messrs. Goschen and Joubert, the representatives of the bondholders, had the slightest idea of what was impending, and at the time Sadyk's arrest caused the greatest surprise and excitement amongst the whole European element in Cairo. Goschen and his French colleague got on admirably together, and their efforts resulted in the famous Khedivial Decree of November 18, 1876.

In less than two months Goschen was again in London addressing another meeting of the Egyptian bondholders.<sup>2</sup> Of the Viceroy himself he reported not unfavourably. The subsequent conduct, however, of that ruler forced him later on to take a much darker view of his character and aims. At the meeting Goschen described his work. The sacrifice which all the bondholders had to make of some portion of their claims had obtained for them guarantees and a better security for the future. On the Commission of the Public Debt an Englishman was for the first time to have a place. Two Controllers-General, with very extensive powers, the one English the other French, were to be associated with the Minister of Finance, and to take part in the preparation of the Budget, for which purpose they were to be summoned to

<sup>1</sup> According to Lord Cromer there is no doubt that he was murdered whilst proceeding up the Nile.—*Modern Egypt*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> November 28, 1876.

the Council of Ministers. The Khedive appointed his son Tewfik to be Finance Minister under the new system. Goschen explained his plan at some length; not, indeed, representing it as perfect, but merely as the best that could be done under the circumstances, and he concluded his remarks in a sanguine spirit.

'When we went to Egypt we found a disposition to be unfaithful to engagements, we hope we have left a disposition to fulfil engagements and to carry out the terms that have been asked for. When we went to Egypt we found France and England not united, but struggling for different financial schemes; we have left English influence and French influence both working together to support the scheme which we have propounded. We found a corrupt Minister of Finance, we have left a Minister of Finance who, being the son of the Viceroy, I trust gives pledges of his good conduct for the future. . . .' The meeting ended with a unanimous resolution of thanks to Goschen for his exertions, and an acknowledgment of 'the zeal, dispatch, and masterly ability with which the negotiations had been brought by him to a successful issue.'

The Khedivial Decree of November 18, 1876—the 'Goschen Decree,' as it came to be called in Egypt—provided that the appointments of officials under the new system should be made by the Khedive on the nomination of the British and French Governments; but when her Majesty's Government were invited to nominate, they declined the responsibility, and the Khedive, on December 4, 1876, wrote to Goschen, after recounting the circumstances, as follows:

'Dans cette situation je ne puis mieux faire que de m'adresser à votre haute expérience, et je viens vous prier de vouloir bien soumettre à mon choix des personnes remplissant les conditions exigées par le décret, et aptes à remplir les fonctions auxquelles elles doivent être appelées.'

There were to be appointed, he goes on to say, a Controller-General of the Finances, a Commissioner of the Public Debt, and two Administrators for the Railways. Goschen at once offered the English Commissionership of the Debt to Major Baring, who accepted 'the important post without hesitation, promising to devote his best energies to doing credit to his nomination.'<sup>1</sup> The appointment was fraught with the most important consequences both for Egypt and Great Britain. On March 2, 1877, Baring arrived in Egypt, the destinies of which country in the coming years he was to take so large and distinguished a part in moulding.

Up to that time the Europeans who had settled in Egypt and hung on the skirts of the Egyptian Government had not won for themselves a good name in the opinion of the public.

'It was the result of Lord Goschen's mission,' writes Lord Cromer two-and-thirty years later, 'that Ismail Pasha had, for the first time, to deal with a small body of European officials, who were not only invested with more ample powers than any which had previously been conferred on European functionaries in Egypt, but who were also of a different type from those Europeans with whom he had heretofore been generally brought in contact.'

He does not claim that he and his colleagues could boast the possession of qualifications at all rare in the French and English Civil Services.

'But we all possessed some characteristics in common. We were all honest. We were all capable of forming and of expressing independent opinions, and we were all determined to do our duty to the best of our abilities.'<sup>2</sup>

Goschen's hopes that the terms of his arrangement

<sup>1</sup> Major Baring to Goschen, January 4, 1877.

<sup>2</sup> *Modern Egypt*, by Lord Cromer.

would be faithfully adhered to, and that the Government of Egypt would be able by its means to regain its position of independence, were doomed to disappointment. We cannot follow here the story of Egypt, which is no longer directly connected with Goschen's career. It has been admirably and authoritatively told by Lord Cromer. Somewhat later a short-lived attempt was made to establish a responsible Ministry under the Khedive, with Sir Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières as Ministers respectively of Finance and Public Works in an Administration formed by Nubar Pasha. The history of this interval was summed up in the *Times* by a well-informed resident in Egypt, writing from Alexandria on November 18, 1878, 'just two years after the Khedive had signed the "Goschen Decree"—our most important State document since the treaty which settled the present dynasty in hereditary possession of the Egyptian throne.' It was there pointed out that though the arrangement effected by Messrs. Goschen and Joubert had not fulfilled all expectations, or proved a final settlement of financial difficulties, it was in fact the first step in the right direction, and its importance was not to be lost sight of in admiration of the more recent revolution under which responsible constitutional government was to take the place of the personal rule of the Viceroy. Goschen's jottings in the 'Shilling Diary' for that year show the intensity of interest with which he was following events in Egypt, and a good deal of correspondence passed between him and the Khedive. The bondholders' representatives, Goschen and Joubert, in very plain language intimated to Ismail that they felt they had been trifled with, and they pressed upon him the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry to overhaul the whole of the accounts—the details of expenditure, as well as the sources

and amount of the revenue. In this they were ultimately successful. The Commission was appointed,<sup>1</sup> and its report made public in August. At last the 'Egyptian Verres,' as Lord Cromer calls the Khedive, was obliged to render an account of his stewardship to a body of men determined to arrive at the truth. The trial of constitutional government then inaugurated was not a long one, for the Khedive had no intention of relinquishing his authority. He endeavoured to regain all, and more than all, that he had lost by fanning and using for his own purposes the spirit of Egyptian nationalism. His dethronement by the Sultan in favour of his son was brought about at the instance of the Great Powers, and a new chapter in the history of Egypt was opened.

It must be remembered that in this mission to Egypt, high though its political importance was, Goschen was not in any way accredited by the British Government to that country, and thus he might erroneously have been supposed to wield less influence than M. Joubert, who not only represented the French bondholders, but had at his back the French Government as well. Before starting, however, Goschen had been in communication both with the Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Northcote, and the latter had written to the former (July 25, 1876) that he saw no political objection to the proposals Goschen had laid before Lord Salisbury. 'They may succeed or fail; but at worst they can do no harm. I shall be ready to certify through our Consul-General, if desired, that Mr. G. is a man who can be trusted, and who commands general respect in England.' These were, politically speaking,

<sup>1</sup> April 4, 1878. Sir Rivers Wilson, Riaz Pasha and the Commissioner of the Public Debt were members of it.

his only credentials. On his return probably few letters gave Goschen more gratification than the following one from his old chief :

'I did not,' wrote Mr. Gladstone from Hawarden,<sup>1</sup> 'for reasons which I will explain to you when we meet, send my good wishes on your assumption of your heavy task in connexion with Egyptian finance, but I admired your courage and public spirit, and felt that if a rescue were possible you were the man to effect it. And I can now most freely send you a hearty line of congratulation. I have read you to-day in the *Daily News*, and I am very glad to see so much evidence of reality and sincerity in the provisions adopted by the Khedive for giving effect to your plan. I have not yet seen your progressive balance sheet, but can quite understand that there may be a very good hope for Egypt without a foreign intervention. Turkish finance is, I fear, much farther gone, along with the whole Turkish case. The position there is a false one: in the Khedive's case there is nothing radically unsound, true as it may be on the other hand that we have no perfect security for a continuing respect to the arrangements made.'

On the return of the mission it was generally felt that it had been successful in effecting much, though a very short time was sufficient to show that no durable improvement had been or could be accomplished whilst the Khedive remained in possession of his full authority. Three years later the British and French Governments took the financial control of Egypt into their own hands, and Ismail was replaced by his son Tewfik. After the lapse of another three years the military insurrection against the new Khedive took place. It was impossible either to allow Egypt to fall into anarchy or to re-establish the ancient authority of the Turks. It was to the last degree

<sup>1</sup> November 29, 1876.

undesirable in British eyes that Egypt should become the province of some great European Power, were any Power anxious to assume such responsibility. The remaining alternative was a British armed occupation of the country, which it was hoped by statesmen of all parties would be a temporary one, but which has continued ever since.

We are, however, anticipating events. When Goschen returned to England, Mr. Gladstone's pro-Russian agitation of the autumn of 1876 was at its height.

## CHAPTER VI

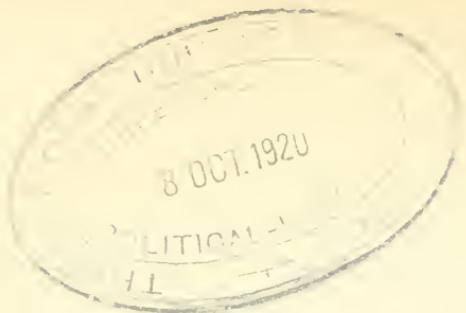
### HOME LIFE AND POLITICS

SINCE Goschen, in 1863, had first come into the House of Commons, politics had necessarily been the chief interest and occupation of his life. In his years of opposition (1875-80), though free, of course, from departmental labours and anxieties, there was much in the political circumstances of the day which weighed upon his spirits and, in some cases, obsessed him as an almost personal trouble. He never looked upon politics as a game. In his correspondence and diary jottings we see how deep at this time was his anxiety about the state of affairs in Egypt, and as regards 'obstruction' in the House of Commons. As regards the former, he felt keenly the responsibility he had himself incurred in his mission on behalf of the bondholders in 1876. As to the latter, he feared greatly, as was natural to one who looked beyond the difficulties of the moment to permanent results, that the future usefulness and dignity of Parliament were being impaired. To the minds of few statesmen engaged in the keen political strife of the day were the remoter and more lasting consequences of political speech and action so continually present. In Party warfare to many a protagonist the range of view appears to be limited to the winning of a handsome majority in the House of Commons, or the still greater triumph of a victory at the next General



MRS. GOSCHEN

*From a painting by Lehmann*



Election. Nevertheless, Goschen was so happily constituted that, deeply though he felt the seriousness of things political, and hard as he toiled to master the intricacies and details of every subject with which he dealt, it was always possible to him on occasion at once to throw aside anxieties and cares, and immerse himself to the full in the enjoyment of the occupations and pursuits of his less busy friends. No one ever enjoyed social life, or family life, or the idleness of a thorough holiday more than he did. Of this, his little diary, and still more his letters to friends and relations, are ample evidence.

Amongst these friends and correspondents few were so highly valued as Mr. and Mrs. Hayter.<sup>1</sup> Visits were frequent from the Hayters to the Goschens at Seacox Heath (which was in the immediate neighbourhood of Bedgebury, the home of Mr. Beresford-Hope), and from the Goschens to the Hayters at Tintagel in Cornwall, and at South Hill Park, Bracknell, once the country house of Canning. In London they met constantly, so constantly indeed that the interchange of notes was but supplementary to personal talk, and therefore hardly constitutes a correspondence in itself of which any account can be given.

In December 1875 grave charges had been made, in a suit before Vice-Chancellor Malins, against the house of Frühling and Göschen in respect of matters that had occurred since Goschen himself had retired from all mercantile business. Upon the suggestion of the Vice-Chancellor the case was compromised, all allegations against

<sup>1</sup> Captain Hayter, M.P. for Bath; was a Lord of the Treasury and a Liberal Whip, 1880-1882. Succeeded his father as Sir Arthur Hayter, Bart., and was created Lord Haversham in 1906. Mrs. Hayter was the youngest daughter of Mr. Adrian Hope, and niece of the Right Hon. A. J. Beresford-Hope, M.P. One of her sisters was Mrs. Campbell, often referred to in Goschen's letters; now Lady Stratheden.

the honourable conduct of the firm being withdrawn. Goschen's anxieties had been great.

'You know,' he writes to Mrs. Hayter (December 14, 1875), 'how determined we were to fight our fight; but the suggestion coming from the Vice-Chancellor was considered by our Counsel to be irresistible and most satisfactory. James<sup>1</sup> drew up the terms of retraction as broadly and amply as possible. . . . The strain of anxiety has been intense. I who can scarcely listen to a political attack on me without excitement and sensitiveness had for two days to sit in court being misrepresented in a maddening way by Counsel. It was certainly what Dumas would call *un supplice*. So far there have been no annoying comments in any of the papers except a virulent and false little "Financial Note" in the *Hour*. I went burning with rage to Henry James, but he would not let us write a reply or do anything but treat the notice with contempt.'

In 1877 the Goschens, who had just been reading 'The New Republic,' spent a Saturday to Monday with Dr. Jowett, the Master of Balliol, and found 'the reminders given by his little odd sentences, of what is written in the book, irresistibly funny.' In July the Goschens and their children were looking forward to a holiday at Ostend. He, however, was detained in Town, and as Irish obstruction developed, the more than usual weariness of the Member of Parliament towards the close of a Session grew upon him.

'Last week [to Mrs. Hayter, July 30, 1877] was most interesting in the House, though the proceedings made me very melancholy. I fear the outlook is very discouraging. The Irish on the whole have had a victory, and know it, and they will continue to destroy the pleasantness and dignity of debates, and make everybody disgusted with us, besides the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry James, now Lord James of Hereford.

actual evils of obstruction. The Government people were very low and unhappy on Friday.'

A week later, at quite the fag-end of the Session, he writes from the House of Commons :

' Lucy and the six children are crossing to Ostend to-day ; and great were the lamentations that I could not go with the rest. I am looking forward to rest and ease. I have been much bothered with Egypt again, but I shall try to put everything aside. I shall avoid Egypt, politics, and *statistics*, and not relapse into anything serious or worrying. I expect we shall all be too lazy to do much letter writing, and it will be a good plan to be selfish, and think only of the pleasure of the hour. That is the best programme, is it not ? for a tired man ; though for the matter of that I think I keep up my "go" as long as anyone. The House looks fearfully jaded ; men wander about listlessly, and everybody seems as if they had a grievance (which is probably that others are enjoying themselves while they remain tied here). I dare say I shall not read much at first except French novels. I want to read Matthew Arnold's "Literature and Dogma" by and bye. If the curate at South Hill recommends you any other really good French novels, pray let me know, but I did not admire "Deux Amours," which I think he lent you.'

In another letter, a day or two later, Goschen tells Mrs. Hayter

' he had been to the Libraries to lay in a store of books. Two vols. of the "Life of Erasmus," Wallace's "Russia" for Maude, two German novels for both of us, two old novels of Miss Ferrier recommended to me by Molly Alderson for Lucy and me, and one or two more. I have your "Tresse Blonde" for French, I have not read it yet. . . . Your list of proposed reading, Arnold's "Essays" and Newman and Froude's book, is rather *heavy*, I wonder whether you will go through with them. . . . They told me at the London Library that the late Bishop of Winchester used to read a

great many French novels, and that the Bishops have been pulling hard at their stock of novels lately. I have been writing against time as the post is going out.'

At the end of August Goschen writes<sup>1</sup> from Ostend (where they delighted in the sands, but missed the beautiful and interesting country they had found near Dieppe during an autumn holiday two years before) that even during his holiday he cannot quite escape from the Egypt worry, as she would have seen from his letter to the *Times*.

'The only *distraction* we have had,' he continues, 'has been seeing the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Prussia, who were most cordial, and we dined with them three times. Unfortunately they went away ten days after we arrived. It was most interesting hearing about German politics, Bismarck, etc. The Crown Princess speaks in the most open way, astoundingly frank. She is strongly Anti-Russian. Once when we dined there, the Prince of Wales dined too. He seems in very bad spirits and *distrait*, though they say he is so devoted to the Crown Princess. . . . The Crown Princess asked me to write something in her book. I composed some verses for her on the Session of 1877, as she is very political in her talk. I shall show the copy to you some day, but as they are not very complimentary to our doings, they are not quite fit for other people's eyes.'

He had liked Miss Ferrier's 'Inheritance'—'though the others did not care for it'—had been reading some of Charles Reade's novels, and a capital Russian novel translated by Merimée, the French novelist: most amusing and quite 'above the usual tone. . . . also a German novel, which was so beautiful that I was quite sorry nobody else could read it. It was too difficult even for Maude.'

Goschen always delighted in clever fiction. He would devour a good novel, reading every page in intense absorption

<sup>1</sup> To Mrs. Hayter, August 27, 1877.

from the first line to the last, and for the time being losing sight of everything else. His family recall that on one of his long continental journeys, he being then an elderly man, a bedroom had been secured for him at Cologne that he might enjoy a night's rest on the way. He had, however, taken up at starting one of Gaboriau's novels to read in the train, and was only half-way through it when he arrived at Cologne. There, as had been arranged, he betook himself to the bespoken room at the hotel, where he spent the whole night *not* in the contemplated repose, but in finishing his novel, continuing his journey next morning without ever having been to bed! What he read with intentness a powerful memory enabled him to retain, and his talk, entirely without pretension or pedantry, disclosed his wide acquaintance with general literature, not less than his knowledge of men. There was no society in which Goschen was not the best of company, and no one appreciated or told a good story better than he did. Lady St. Helier, whose acquaintance with the clever men of her time has been exceptionally large and varied, declares that of all those she had known no one equalled Goschen in his keen sense of humour.<sup>1</sup> 'Goschen in great form to-day,' was a frequent comment of Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff in later times, after a dinner at Grillion's or a meeting of the Breakfast Club.

Goschen had a strong belief in the indirect advantage to be gained by general culture in the pursuit of a professional, a business, or a political career. In November 1877, 'speaking as a man of business,' he urged upon the young men of Liverpool who were training for a business career the vast importance of duly cultivating the imagination—the power of representing to ourselves absent things.<sup>2</sup> It was not

<sup>1</sup> Lady St. Helier's *Memories of Fifty Years*.

<sup>2</sup> Address to the Members of the Liverpool Institute, November 29, 1877.

enough to study only such subjects as would directly conduce to the making of money.

‘Livelhood is not a life. Education must deal with your lives as well as qualify you for your livelihoods. It must do more for you than enable you to win your bread, outstrip your neighbours, increase your business, and enable you to marry and bring up a family. I want education to ennable, brighten and beautify your lives.’

He believed in the great educational value of the reading of history, of travel, of tales of adventure, of fiction where, at least, fiction was more than a mere literal photograph of daily life—of all reading, in short, which carried the reader into other worlds, and cultivated his imagination. That general cultivation hampers a man in a business career Goschen would never admit, though the notion was often held. He cited the case of his own father, who, when very young, came to England with a friend little older than himself, and with very little money in his pocket.

‘He has told me himself half in joke and half in earnest, that he was obliged to found a firm because he wrote such a bad hand that no one would take him for a clerk. But he was steeped to the lips in intellectual culture. . . . He had heard Schiller read his own plays. He had listened to the conversation of great thinkers and great poets. He was a good historian, an acute critic, well versed in literature, and a fine musician to boot.’

And all this, far from hindering, aided that wonderful success of which mention has already been made.

Early in 1878 Goschen took to entering, in ‘Parkins and Gotto’s Shilling Diary’ for the year, little jottings on passing events. The political situation was exceedingly interesting and critical, and the casual notes vividly recall

the excited feelings of the day, and at the same time show the position of importance held by Goschen in the councils of the leading Liberal statesmen.

### GOSCHEN'S DIARY—1878.

*'Tuesday, January 29.—Very exciting politically in Egypt and every way. Meeting at Granville's at 12 to decide our course about vote of credit. Everybody except Hartington and me quite enthusiastic about fighting the Government. Hartington hung back and almost resigned leadership. I back him. Row with Harcourt. He holds me personally responsible for separating Hartington from Liberal Party. My reply. Result—Forster is to move a mild resolution. Hartington to sum up. My fear of being left in the lurch, etc.'*

*Thursday, January 31.—Goschen returned to London after a dinner at the Palmerston Club at Oxford :*

*'Johnston, Harcourt, etc. Go and see Hartington as soon as I can. No one wants to speak first. Things don't look comfortable. . . . News from Russia bad. To the House. Forster's opening conciliatory. Then a furious speech from Cross. On Hartington's challenge I make up my mind to speak next day. Went to Hayters' to dinner. Only the girls and Philip [Mrs. Hayter's sisters and brother]. Arrived mad with anger at Cross's speech, and declared I would insult him. Lucy [Mrs. Goschen] and Hayter went back to House and heard Bright make a beautiful speech. Sandon replied. What a contrast ! Slept very badly indeed.'*

*'Friday, February 1.—Worked at my speech all day after 12. Harcourt came in and gave me some points. I am not nearly ready, and feel incompetent. Fearfully difficult. Trevelyan opens—bad speech, too elaborate.*

Sir Robert Peel follows—coarse and not very good. Then Lowe. I got quite nervous, he spoke so hesitatingly. Home to dinner to refresh. Margaret and Agnes dined, and I made fun about my coming speech. Lucy went back with me to the House. Spoke. Beach followed me.

*'Saturday, February 2.—Slept better after a desperately exciting week. Congratulations on speech. . . . Wolverton called in the morning about row in the City. Dined at Ripon's, Hughes, Harcourts, Dicky Doyle and Browning, . . . obtrusive but amusing.'*

On the opposite blank page of the diary a rather more expanded account of the debate is given.

*'Thursday.—The first night of the Debate. Forster was not very well backed. Disappointed at Hartington's not moving and probably [illegible], but he made no attack in the way of imputing a warlike policy to the Government. But Cross had prepared for this and opened on him in a furious speech. He was frantically cheered by Conservatives, who cheered him most when he said "there was a lying spirit abroad." Bright spoke later in the evening and made a fine statesmanlike speech not pitching into Cross which I vowed to do. The political point of Cross's speech was "the Russians are still advancing." The secrecy with which Russia is acting heightens our difficulty immensely. The spirit of the country is getting up and we are more and more getting into war (?).*

*'Friday.—Still no news of signing of peace. It gets worse and worse. Trevelyan, Lowe, and Peel, early in the evening. After dinner Smyth, a stilted but beautiful speech. Bourke emptied the House, to my intense disgust. I hope at the last moment to get off but don't. After five minutes I got the House under control and had one of my greatest oratorical successes. I was never more congratulated nor more warmly even by men who scarcely knew me and the charm seems to have been my repartee in dealing with the*

Opposition. I hit Cross tremendously hard, but answered the Conservatives. It is a speech which will help me very much in the House, but Lucy and the Speaker thought it was too jocose, though I had a very earnest peroration. Harcourt, Forster and Childers all very enthusiastic. The papers next day called the debate dull. The House had emptied so.

‘*Saturday*.—Still no news of armistice being signed. It is too extraordinary and most suspicious. Excitement gets more and more intense.’

And so the days pass, Goschen constantly conferring with Lord Hartington and Lord Granville, and hearing in his social life, whether at home or abroad, nothing but incessant, controversial and excited discussion of the question of the day.

‘*Tuesday, February 5*.—Tremendous political rows—constant excited arguments. Mrs. Campbell hotter than anybody. Mrs. J. Stanley sent in message. Everybody more political and controversial than I ever remember. People scarcely talk of anything else. Mrs. H. miserable about the party which is breaking up. . . .’

It was the same thing at Count Münster’s<sup>1</sup> ball, where Mr. and Mrs. Goschen took their daughter Maude, after a party at the Speaker’s. ‘Immense sensation on account of news of Russians approaching Constantinople. Hardy fearfully excited.’ And yet, in the midst of all this violence and Party heat, there grew up, as sometimes happens at such times, a feeling that there was compromise in the air, and Sunday’s *Observer* noticed it.

‘Forster and Wolverton,’ says the diary next day, ‘were inclined that way. A sudden change of feeling. Letter

<sup>1</sup> The German Ambassador.

from Fitzmaurice about Compromise. I go to Hartington. He had been no party to it and had discouraged it. Went with Hartington to Granville's, where I found Forster. Granville showed us that Conservatives would never accept compromise. They were too eager for victory and a great division. Nothing could come of it. Matters are changing for the worse with us every day. Numbers of members can scarcely make up their minds to vote with us. Meetings are held against us in many parts of the country. We are clearly unpopular. Hartington and I foresaw all this. It is miserable to think how great a mistake it has been. No news of armistice or of signature of peace.'

On Thursday, February 7, Goschen attended a meeting at Lord Hartington's. In the House the unwisdom of continuing the debate at a time when men's view of the situation was changing almost from hour to hour as information arrived from Sir Henry Layard at Constantinople, or from the Russian Embassy in London, was apparent. This was the fifth day of the debate on Forster's amendment to the Speaker leaving the Chair to go into Committee on the vote for £6,000,000. Forster, at the sitting of the House, with the approval of Lord Hartington, proposed to withdraw his amendment. On this a good deal of discussion arose, and the proceedings became quite dramatic as from time to time conflicting news was communicated to Parliament as to the movements of the Russian armies. Ultimately, Forster's amendment was, by leave of the House, withdrawn. Contrary to the advice of Lord Hartington, the proposal to go into Committee was opposed; Mr. Gladstone and ninety-five members voted in the minority, whilst Lord Hartington and most of the Front Opposition Bench walked out of the House, the Ministerial majority being just under two hundred.

A few days of comparative quiet followed, in which Goschen was able to busy himself with his Egypt correspondence, the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company, University Extension, and even to find time to seek distraction in the 'Makers of Florence,' and other light literature. 'On the 11th, brought up four from House; Chamberlain, Lefevre, Hugessen, Grant Duff. Very good fun. Smoked late.' The lull was a short one. Goschen was as much dissatisfied with the state of European politics as with the condition of the Liberal Party. On February 12, notes the diary :

'important statement about Russian advance, and British Fleet. Derby, "within forty-eight hours the Fleet will be at the Bosphorus." Despatch of Russians that they will follow suit. Derby says it is "friendly and conciliatory." Münster says to me it is "bitterer Hohn." The Government have given the Russians a splendid opportunity to enter Constantinople.'

A week later, however, it appeared that the Russians did not intend to enter Constantinople, and 'the excitement in England begins to subside.' 'February 20.—Bismarck's speech appears to me very unsatisfactory. Cold to all parties except Russia.' It added to the general uncertainty that no one could tell how long Lord Derby would remain in office, and rumours of his resignation were persistent.

'Long talk with Cotes about moderate men,' continues the diary. 'He declares they are in a majority. I am coming to the conclusion that a schism must come. We cannot be dragged any further by Gladstone and Bright. We are compromised by them every moment. This is my ruling idea. We have no opportunity of showing our anti-Russian feeling.'

All this time the difficulties with the Khedive of Egypt were coming to a head.

'Am now working,' says the diary (February 14), 'to get the Viceroy deposed if he won't give way. Final telegram. Prepared letters for the bond-holders.

*February 20.*—All day Egypt. . . . Unsatisfactory interview with Tenterden. Everything appeared impossible to him. Less hope of Viceroy going before Congress. Hipped and tired. *21st.*—Baring's Report published. *February 24.*—Gladstone's windows broken. *March 22.*—Egypt affair nearly settled. *28th.*—Derby's resignation. *29th.*—Morning with Rivers Wilson. Granville at 3. *30th.*—News from Baring. Decree for Inquiry signed. *31st.*—Thinking over speech calling out the Reserves. *April 2.*—Rivers Wilson 9 to 12. *April 21.*—First coupon not likely to be paid.'

At the end of April he escapes from these excitements to enjoy a week or two's holiday abroad with his eldest daughter Maude: first for a few days, via Calais and Cologne, to Bremen—'Maude in ecstasy of enjoyment'—and then on to Berlin. There, besides sightseeing, and going to the theatres and to dinners and dances at the Embassy, where Lord and Lady Odo Russell were delightful hosts, Goschen found time to make acquaintance with Herr Lasker, who 'lionised' him and his daughter over the Reichstag, where a Bill was in Committee and a division taken; but they found it very difficult to follow the proceedings.

*Saturday, May 4.*—Went to call on Bleichröder. Very interesting conversation. Banberger called, as did Lasker in the evening. Banberger gave me the impression of a very clever man, but cantankerous and opinionated. Dinner at Lasker's, then to Opera, and Embassy where we

spent a very late evening. *Sunday*.—Left church before end of service to catch Potsdam train and visit Princess Charlotte. The lunch incident. Invited, but sent away without food. . . . Back to Berlin. Immense crowds at Zoological Gardens. Beautiful Band. Dinner at Lord Odo's. Dr. Abel, the *Times* correspondent (Chamberlain style) and Dr. Greist. Otherwise only themselves and an attaché or two. Maude and I enjoyed Lady Odo much.'

He was back in London dining and speaking at the City Liberal Club on May 10, where it appears that the City men 'buttered each other' *ad nauseam*. Goschen evidently did not enjoy the dinner, and the jottings in the diary disclose rising doubt as to the expediency of repeating his candidature for the City. A few days later comes the entry :

' I am beginning to think seriously of retiring from the City representation and compose my address in my mind occasionally. I am annoyed at the state of the party in the House and at the prospect of standing with Lawrence and Rothschild, at the vulgarity of the City people, at their false estimate of everything, at the separation of Liberals from National sentiment, at the absence of any friends "on the bench" etc.'

On May 17 the Goschens went to the banquet given by the Queen at Windsor to the Crown Prince, and the day following he attended the dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund, where the Prince Imperial received a great ovation, rather in excess of what Goschen thought adequate to the occasion. Indeed, Goschen seems to have derived little pleasure from this entertainment. Stanley the traveller was hissed and sat down in the middle of his speech, and Goschen thought his own speech a failure. There was little to cheer him at this time in the House

of Commons. 'Croak over the party with Hayter,' is the comment in the diary; 'the Irish are destroying all interest in the House.' On Sunday evenings he found it a relief to have recourse to the pleasant people and the good talk at the Cosmopolitan Club.

The very day after Parliament rose for the Easter holidays, the newspapers had announced that troops from India to the number of 7000 men were under orders to embark for Malta. When the House of Commons re-assembled the Opposition vigorously contended that it was entirely unconstitutional, without the consent of Parliament, to add to the number of troops expressly limited by Parliament itself for employment in the general service of the Crown. On Monday, May 20, Lord Hartington as Leader of the Opposition, brought forward the motion of censure. The diary proceeds :

'Monday's debate. Hartington opens with a very well argued speech, which pleased our people very much. Hicks Beach with an amendment in a speech horrid in tone and miserable in argument—a very bad speech indeed. Yet I hear Tories liked it, and say he had some of Hardy's fire! Dilke followed in an excellent speech to a small house but delivered too fast. In the evening Harcourt spoke *fairly*. Conversation with Chamberlain, who thinks there is a strong reaction against Government. Resumption of Debate by Fawcett. Speech made me indignant. Mischievous as regards India. The only speech which has travelled out of the Constitutional line. Holker followed, good, hard-hitting speech in his queer style. Pleased his party much. Gladstone follows in one of his finest speeches, well reasoned and clear. . . . Debate then almost collapsed. . . . Tories seemed quite blind to the Constitutional question. . . . Schouvaloff's return. Peace believed in by newspapers. Very full ball at the Palace.

Saw Lady Tavistock, and admired her much. . . . Liberals seem almost entirely united on Hartington's motion. He settled it, without conference with the Ex-Cabinet.

On May 23 the great debate ended in a division which proved a disappointment to Goschen and the Opposition. Turning, as the discussion necessarily did, on questions of constitutional law, it was natural that the legal members of the House should take an unusually large part in it—the lawyers, it need scarcely be said, on the Government side arguing with vigour that the action of the Government was entirely in accordance with the Constitution, whilst the lawyers on the opposite side argued with not less ability and conviction that the movement of the Indian troops to Europe, unsanctioned by Parliament, was entirely opposed to the fundamental principles upon which the Constitution rested. The diary continues :

'Close of the great debate. The best night. Very lively. Cross makes plausible, conversational speech—good in matter. Herschell follows and makes a very good speech. Waddy made a good speech too, while I was at dinner. In the evening the Solicitor made a speech, and is followed by James, who, speaking for two hours, had a great triumph (but newspapers afterwards gave him little credit). Northcote made a very lame and dull speech. Hartington wound up excellently. Division far worse than we expected. The Conservatives, however, have been tremendously knocked about in debate. Lowe says this debate has raised his opinion of the House. *Friday*.—We settle not to oppose the vote for the Indian troops. Gladstone still fearfully keen about legal points. Utterly false rumour in the afternoon about Ministerial resignations. But general idea that everything is settled. Stocks rising fast.'

However, when Monday came, in spite of what had been 'settled' on the Friday, the question as to how the Opposition should act, when the vote for the Indian troops actually came on, again arose.

'Shall we vote with the Government or stay away? Harcourt and I fought over Hartington's body. He yields to former. I am very cross, but it turns out for the best. Fawcett forces a division on the Speaker leaving the Chair against all our wishes. Hartington makes a good speech in favour of not opposing Government further. On this occasion *nearly all* the Liberals followed him and walked out. Vote carried by 214 to 40. I was uneasy and cross all night, doubting whether or not I could speak. Great rise in stocks. Egypts at 44. . . . Feeling amongst moderate Liberals that they must resist Fawcett and Co. but they won't.'

'June 5.—Great excitement about Congress arrangements—to meet on 13th—Poor Salisbury, snuffed out by Beaconsfield going also. . . .

'July 8.—Disclosure of Treaty between England and Turkey. . . .'

A week later Lord Beaconsfield returns to London, 'bringing Peace with Honour,' and is received with acclamation.

'July 15.—Talking over resignation of the City seat, to Granville, Wolverton and Lubbock.'

After the middle of July the entries in the diary almost completely cease. The last is August 11th, when Goschen 'started with Gibbs for Paris' to attend, at the request of Sir Stafford Northcote, Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Monetary Conference there. Two days later he dined with the distinguished economist M. Léon Say.

When it became known that Goschen was hesitating

whether he should again stand for the City of London, it was natural that a strong desire should be expressed in the City to retain him, and that other constituencies should be eager to have the honour of returning so distinguished a representative. On various grounds he determined to leave the City, though he was assured that his views on county franchise would not make him less valued in London. Ultimately it was arranged that at the General Election he should stand for Ripon.

'I do not think,' wrote Lord Ripon on November 25, 1878, 'your opinion about the County Franchise would stand in your way. As you probably know I have followed Hartington on the subject; but I am pretty nearly the greatest radical in Ripon.'

There were, however, local difficulties preventing Goschen from entering upon a candidature at that time, and there was every appearance of the Liberal Party at Ripon becoming divided. These difficulties were at length composed, and at the end of August 1879 he made his first speech as the accepted candidate of the Party, explaining with great fulness his political opinions. He had left London in consequence of his dislike to contesting a seat where there was Minority representation. He wanted, he said, to fight a Tory opponent single handed where the battle would be decided by the majority of the electors. He was, and had always been, in favour of religious equality, he would support the Burials Bill, whilst he was opposed to Disestablishment—largely on the old Whig ground that the control of the State was the most effective of all barriers against that sacerdotal spirit which was so obnoxious to the bulk of English people. As to the county franchise, he maintained the position he had taken up in the

House of Commons. He gloried in the reforms which the previous Gladstone Government had carried at the expense of their popularity, whilst he condemned recent Conservative legislation as both unreal and insincere. There was, in his opinion, far too much of Government interference with everything, and every new Bill seemed to create an inspector and a rate. As for the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield, he severely criticised its 'swagger' and 'bombast,' and he expressed his entire confidence in the ability and statesmanship of the Liberal Leader, Lord Hartington. A strong Party speech throughout; but one, nevertheless, through which there ran as usual the note of individuality. The views expressed were his own thought-out conclusions. That was clear. If the day should come when new political principles and 'programmes' were laid before the country, it would not be sufficient, in order to enlist his support, to label them 'Liberal.' Assuredly they would be weighed by him on their merits with the most conscientious and painstaking care, before he made himself in the least degree responsible for them.

On March 10 in the following year Goschen issued his address, reflecting strongly on the appeal which Lord Beaconsfield was making to the country.

'My views on the main questions of foreign and domestic policy are not unknown to you. My previous utterances will have led you to expect that I should repudiate with indignation the insinuations of the Prime Minister that his political opponents are indifferent to the greatness and integrity of the Empire. For my own part, in the earliest days of the Home Rule movement, I declared that I would not loosen, by one turn of the windlass, the bonds which bind this Empire together. To this declaration I unflinchingly adhere without qualification or reserve. I explained to you

when I addressed you in September the charges which I bring against the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government. They have followed un-English ways. Former Foreign Secretaries have upheld the honour of the country without a recourse to diplomatic devices and surprises which have marked Lord Salisbury's administration of foreign affairs. I regret that the Government have thrown the influence and example of England on the side of militaryism instead of constitutionalism. I regret that by secret agreements and the annexation of territory they have impaired the reputation of England as the most clean-handed member of the European family. I am frankly glad that Constantinople was kept out of Russian hands, but I deeply regret that the rising nationalities of the East were not taught to look to England as one of their staunchest friends, and that the claims of Greece are still unsatisfied.'

And he goes on to express his well-known views as to the reform of local government. In April he was returned for Ripon, defeating Mr. Francis Darwin, the Conservative candidate, by a large majority.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MISSION TO CONSTANTINOPLE

THE great Liberal victory of 1880 resulted in the formation of the second Gladstone Administration. Though Goschen's opposition to the extension of the county franchise made it impossible for him to join the Cabinet, Mr. Gladstone showed himself eager to employ in the service of his country the abilities of a colleague whom he had so highly valued. Goschen declined the viceroyalty of India, partly because neither he nor Mrs. Goschen were to be tempted by an offer, however dazzling, to separate themselves for five years from their six children just at the time of life when they stood most in need of parental help, and partly because in his inner conscience he did not feel sure that he would see eye to eye with the Prime Minister and his colleagues either on matters of high imperial policy or of native administration. Anything like friction between the Viceroy of India and the Cabinet at home he contemplated with dismay. Lord Granville then offered him the Embassy at Constantinople; but Goschen was not prepared to enter the diplomatic service and abandon political life, though many of his friends kindly assured him that his isolated position in the House of Commons would be a bar to personal advancement and public usefulness. He did not himself share this opinion, and he had no intention of

bidding final farewell to the House of Commons; but when he was further pressed by Lord Granville to undertake a special and temporary mission to Turkey as Ambassador Extraordinary, intimately acquainted with the views of the Cabinet, he felt that the anxious circumstances of the time made it incumbent upon him to give way. The Sultan was at the time persisting in delaying the performance of the conditions imposed by the Treaty of Berlin, and there was a growing risk of war between Turkey and Greece. As the appointment was unpaid, Goschen did not vacate his seat, and his constituents at Ripon cordially approved his proceedings, and reconciled themselves to the temporary residence of their member abroad. Political gossips, of course, hinted, in their pleasant fashion, that the Government were anxious to remove Goschen from a sphere where his presence might be inconvenient to them; but he wisely accepted his new duties in a different spirit, recognised their importance, and welcomed the prospect of employing his energies in the new field of diplomacy. At Mr. Gladstone's suggestion, Goschen, before starting, visited Lord Stratford de Redcliffe—Mr. Kinglake's 'Great Elchi'—whose vigorous personality had carried all before him at Constantinople in the troubles of the 'Fifties.'

'He was the last of those semi-royal, semi-independent Ambassadors, as they were called, who represented their countries' interests before the electric wire had transferred the real responsibilities of international negotiations from the Chancelleries abroad to the Cabinets at home. Possibly it was thought I might learn some of his secrets as to managing the Turk. He was in his ninety-fourth year, but still retained a fine impressive presence. I was struck by his old-world aristocratic courtesy, while the halo of his pristine strength was still palpable around his personality.

His brain seemed absolutely clear and his memory perfect. He was very ready to discuss Turkish politics, but I found him so Turkophil, and so optimistic as to Turkey's future that I came to the conclusion I could not derive much help from him for the purpose of my mission. . . . but I carried away a deeply interesting reminiscence of a most striking figure in British history.'

Goschen arrived at Constantinople, relieving Sir Henry Layard, at the end of May, and Mrs. Goschen, with her young family, followed in June. The immediate object of the British Government was to compel Turkey, by means of the 'Concert of Europe,' to carry out the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin as regards Greece, Montenegro and Armenia, and to get established a strong defensive frontier between Turkey and Greece. On his way out he saw both French and Austrian Prime Ministers, but was unlucky whilst in Paris in missing Gambetta. The language used to him on the continent as to the wisdom of employing material pressure on the Turks was very cautious, and he hopes (as he writes on May 23 to Sir Charles Dilke, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs) that he 'may be encouraged to go further, and to say openly that England thinks if Turkey does not accept their award, she must be forced to do so; of course, keeping the Concert of Europe in view.' The Sultan, as usual, was trading on the belief that the Powers ultimately must disagree, and was making use of every pretext to delay final settlement.

Letters from the Goschens to their great friends Sir Arthur and Lady Hayter were frequent, Mrs. Goschen's describing the beauties of the Bosphorus, the picnics at the Sweet Waters of Asia and the Prince's Islands, a dinner with the Sultan—'the whole scene looking like a scene in an opera'—his letters describing his colleagues and his work, and



FROM GROUP OF AMBASSADORS  
AT CONSTANTINOPLE, 1881



explaining his anxieties, whilst both correspondents joined in pressing upon the Hayters a visit to them before the closing in of autumn would force them to remove from Therapia to Constantinople. In exchange, they received from Lady Hayter abundant news from home, political and otherwise.

‘Tell me,’ writes Goschen to the latter on July 16, somewhat comprehensively, ‘how everybody *does*? Who are the successful new men? What good speeches have been made? Whom does Hayter find it difficult to whip? Who grumble? Who praise? How is Gladstone looking? Is Mrs. John Stanley<sup>1</sup> to the fore? What are the Conservatives saying? How is Northcote acting? Think that we know very little, and write accordingly. What shall I tell you about ourselves, *myself* in particular? The work continues tremendous. You may judge of part of it when I tell you I have received 266 telegrams from Granville. It is very interesting work, but people on the spot and people at a distance will never take the same view and *entre nous soit dit* to your own discreet ear and to nobody else’s, there are times when I entirely approve the instructions I am to carry out. . . . Accordingly I have to follow here instead of leading the way. Still my position here is a very great one and the Turks are afraid of me, which is a very good thing. Progress is slow, of course, but the studies of character in which I have the opportunity of indulging are very great. There are my colleagues, and there are the Turks of all descriptions. My great fault is, I fear, that I cannot bring myself to believe that people tell barefaced lies till I have really caught them out.

‘I consider things look very gloomy indeed; and that bloodshed is not at all improbable. How I should like a good talk with you about the situation at home! . . . I still work exceedingly hard, but Lucy cut off the night hours

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Mrs. John Stanley; now Lady St. Helier.

as soon as she arrived. I don't know what I should have done if she and the children had not come.'

As autumn approached the prospect darkened. Common action by the Powers, in case Turkey should prove recalcitrant, was evidently exceedingly difficult to the 'Concert of Europe.' Mr. Gladstone was prepared for coercive measures —to send the fleet to Smyrna to take possession of the port and the customs, and so bring the Sultan to his knees. Goschen was for strong measures. Thus he writes on September 28 from the Embassy, Constantinople:

(*Personal.*)

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,

'... Don't be startled if I plunge at once *in medias res* and express conviction that the fleets must come up here. The Sultan has begun a struggle of which it is difficult to see the end, and has I fear been desperate. It is just possible, of course, he may yield at the very last moment; but the unfortunate hitch in Montenegro which I heard this morning comes most inopportunely. What will the Cabinets do? It is clearly absolutely impossible to let the Turks "gagner la partie." Austria, I presume, will not permit troops to be landed. Montenegro may persist that she is too weak, and you will probably have to take the momentous step of ordering the fleet to the Dardanelles, if other Powers will agree. I have been thinking if this is the only course the Greek question should not be mooted at once also. I mean revived from the sleep into which it apparently lies buried, so that the new naval demonstration might be with the object of securing both objects.' It would never do, he goes on, to let the Turks think they had gained by their stratagems and wiles. 'Europe must win all along the line. Compromise has been deemed impossible. Therefore there is nothing for it, except to go ahead. . . .' He sees the

danger, but thinks that 'the appearance of the fleet off Seraglio Point is the only possible end.'

Lord Odo Russell (from Berlin, October 9, 1880, to Lord Granville) was not less strong: he would leave Smyrna to her fogs and send the fleet straight to the Golden Horn with or without allies, in the event of France, Germany and Russia *declining* to co-operate as regards Smyrna (as they promptly did). Lord Granville, on returning from Balmoral, had been hard at work with the Corps Diplomatique and his Cabinet colleagues, and on September 30 had written to Goschen of his concurrence in his views of what should be done:

'the great difficulty is not in making out what would be right, but in accomplishing it without the jibbing of the slowest horses in the team. None being very good collared, excepting one, who might very possibly run away. We are very stout about keeping up the Concert and stimulating the rest to do whatever may be needful.'

Suddenly the Sultan gave way to the threatened pressure, and the cession of territory to Montenegro was at last quietly accomplished. So far good. Goschen's excellent services were gratefully recognised by Lord Granville, and Mr. Gladstone in not less warm terms sent his appreciative thanks to the Ambassador at Constantinople.

'Holmbury, Dorking,  
'October 3, 1880.

'MY DEAR GOSCHEN,

'You have no time to read a long letter, or even a short one. Every fresh envelope addressed to you must be a fresh shock to your nerves. Yet I cannot help inflicting upon you, one earnest, but I believe impartial word of encouragement, if I may so speak, and at any rate of

acknowledgment. You are something of a pillar, something that a man can lean on ; you have shown in circumstances of great difficulty a combination of acuteness, of uprightness of mind, of courage, and assiduity, such as it does one good to see.

‘I wish I could think you had got through the roughest of the work ; but I feel confident that the qualities, which have carried you thus far, will carry you to the end. I write on the day which is to produce the Sultan’s satisfactory arrangement. And a true day of rest it will prove to have been, if he is now at length at the end of his dodges. If he is not, what I should hope, what I should always advise, would be that we should make him speak plainly instead of mumbling. What I mean is that when, from himself or any of his creatures, if he says we will give up something which he cannot stand, and which is quite definite, he will give us something else quite as good, which is perfectly indefinite. When he comes to substituting, we should treat his words as mere wind, until we get the what, the where, the how and the when. We do not bate any jot of heart, hope, or intention : and I could say much of the Cabinet ; none of it, but what is good only I must not exceed my sheet.’

Lord Granville wrote (October 19, 1880) of the complete confidence of the Cabinet in Gladstone, Goschen and himself.

‘Bright was most amiable—satisfying his conscience, by occasional deliverances as to the folly of war and the stupidity of the Country to interfere with things which did not concern them, but offering no obstruction to anything we proposed.’

Nevertheless, the Montenegrin difficulty was hardly yet at an end, for three weeks later the Sultan was again postponing settlement, and Lord Granville was writing to Goschen that it might even be necessary for him to leave

Constantinople earlier than he intended, and 'with some splash.'

Mr. Gladstone again wrote (October 27, 1880), in reply to a letter of Goschen's, as to the steps to be taken to follow up the successes of Dulcigno and the Montenegrin frontier. His letter contained some judicious comments on the mutual confidence in each other that should exist between the Ministers at home and 'the man on the spot.'

'I believe you and we are completely at one as to instructions, desires and propositions. But mood is acted upon by *entourage*; and our, let me rather say Granville's, *entourage* is different from yours. He is in close communication with foreign Governments, you with the Constantinople Ambassadors, and these upon the whole, and notably in one if not more instances, are better than the Governments. He is in the best position of us all for judging how great a weight we can safely hang upon what ought to be a cable, but sometimes seems a thread—an European Concert. He has got to pursue a most difficult line by means as difficult, and in doing this he has very properly renounced the big drum, and never uses a word except what, so far as England is concerned, he means to act upon, within the limits of course of the other two conditions. A task not only of Hercules, but almost of Sisyphus.'

'I feel the question that will arise after we get quit of Dulcigno, and say of Montenegro, to be a most grave one. Sole action might be Quixotic, and would only require a new start. But what form combination may take, and when, can I fear only be judged at the last moment. Most certainly if there is to be a halt, it will not be, so far as I am concerned, a case of "rest and be thankful," but rather of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. I write this on the instant from Hawarden without its passing under any ministerial eye. Yet I write boldly in proportion as I believe that *our* Concert, at any rate, holds and will hold.'

When in this field the will of Europe had at last prevailed, there remained the greater difficulty contemplated by Mr. Gladstone, of the enlarged frontier assigned to Greece as a reward to her for the neutrality she had maintained during the Russo-Turkish War. Dulcigno having been surrendered, and the Montenegrin difficulty satisfactorily settled, Goschen found it possible to take a holiday from his arduous labours. The month of January 1881 he spent in England.

'I was struck,' he says, 'whilst at home by the little interest taken by my old colleagues in the grave situation in the East which might easily have developed into war, and in the problems which I had been sent to solve. Only two members of the Cabinet had mentioned the subject. Irish affairs, which were indeed serious enough, engrossed their attention, and they could spare no thought for the international issues which to me seemed of such vital importance. Governors and Ambassadors, at home on leave, often wonder at the stinted interest in the matter over which they have been toiling when they find themselves amongst the jostling of a hundred other topics of the day. My Cabinet and diplomatic experiences have afforded me a view of both sides. On the one hand the frosty reception of claims for helpful and loyal attention, and on the other hand the fretful feeling, "does this man think that his post is the hub of the world?" In these weeks I felt the discomfort "of the frost," though not at the hands of my charming and sympathetic chief.'

Lord Acton at this time visited Goschen at Seacox Heath. He and others seemed to imagine that there was a certain lack of cordiality on the part of old colleagues, who might have been expected to press Goschen to re-enter the Cabinet. Of this Goschen states that he himself had no recollection whatever, believing that neither Mr. Gladstone

nor he himself had the slightest idea of anything of the kind.

‘Lord Acton was impatient with me for not throwing in my lot finally with Mr. Gladstone, and making overtures as to joining the Cabinet. “Don’t remember,” wrote Acton characteristically, “our difference of opinion at the disagreement between a Whig who leans towards Burke, and a Whig who leans towards Fox. It is rather the impatience of one who thinks Gladstone the most efficient political force in the country, with the next in rank, who, instead of grasping the golden hours, forgets the uncertainty of life, the capriciousness of fortune, the religious sanctity of the Liberal cause.”’

During Goschen’s absence in England the Greco-Turkish frontier question had not slept.

‘Diplomacy had been busily, almost impetuously, at work, this time under the lead of France. Monsieur Barthélemy St. Hilaire, the French Foreign Minister, conceived the idea that Greece and Turkey might be persuaded into submitting the frontier line to the arbitration of the Powers. He embodied the new policy in three state papers of portentous length, couched, for the most part, in almost hysterical rhetoric. In the first he pointed out the stupendous perils threatening the civilised world should Greece and Turkey not compose their differences. Next, in a dispatch to the French Minister at Athens, he assailed Greece with a prodigious lecture on her duties and her follies. . . . His apprehensions were not groundless, but it was startling to find him so set on the moral coercion of Greece into accepting arbitration that he developed an entirely new line of reasoning. He even took up the Turkish attitude and preached to the Greeks that the Conference at Berlin had merely acted in the character of a mediator, attempting to conciliate the parties by indicating how an understanding might be arrived at: their mandate was confined within these limits. He called international law to his assistance, which

attempted to quench Greek excitement by quoting Vattel's definition of mediation. In scathing language he enumerated the wicked courses of Greece since the Berlin Conference, such as the raising of her troops to 80,000 men, and contrasting this with the pacific attitude of the Turks. The war, if once begun, between Greece and Turkey would extend from stage to stage, and the conflagration extinguished with so much difficulty in 1878 would be lighted once more with irresistible intensity. . . . Greece must think of something besides her own *amour propre*. "Nations are as much bound as individuals to refrain from egotistical illusions. . . . If the powerful arguments which are addressed to the magnanimity and wisdom of the Hellenic people and its Government do not touch them, nothing remains for the civilised world but to leave on them the entire and heavy responsibility of the formidable events which we foresee and shall have vainly attempted to forestall."

'The *verbosa et grandis epistola* left the patriotic little State unmoved. Continuing to nurse their "egotistical illusions," the Chamber voted a war loan of 125 million francs, and pushed on bellicose operations. . . . The anxieties of other Ministers, though not so dramatically expressed, were hardly less keen. M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire wrote a third dispatch elaborating his contention with fresh rhetorical vigour, entirely forgetting that France in the previous summer had associated herself unreservedly with the declarations of the remaining Powers to an absolutely contrary effect. The Pashas must have chuckled when they heard the argument on which they had founded their resistance adopted by France, and the whole responsibility for the deadlock put upon Greece.

Of all the Foreign Ministers Lord Granville was the most loyal to the Berlin Conference, and Germany came nearest to England in feeling scruples as to the *volte face* to which the Concert would be a party by the use of arguments

which completely destroyed the authority of the mandate which had issued from Berlin. Austria, deeply concerned in obtaining some settlement of the difficulty, was comparatively careless as to the precise settlement arrived at. Hence Baron Haymerl<sup>é</sup><sup>1</sup> welcomed the new line taken by France. But as neither Greece nor Turkey desired arbitration, nothing came of it, and 'once more the Powers were all at sea groping for a policy.'

'Lord Granville now came to the rescue, mentioning "incidentally" to the French Ambassador in London that Germany's position in Eastern Europe would enable that Government more easily than any other to make acceptable proposals in order to prevent what seemed imminent war.'

Bismarck, however, was not favourable to coercive measures, and advised compliance with the Turkish proposal to negotiate, and this Baron Haymerl<sup>é</sup> eagerly welcomed. The Powers had already rejected such negotiations. But it was said that times were changed.

'Russia and France were inclined to make conditions. The Porte was to be asked how far she would go in the direction of concessions; but once more the true stand on behalf of Greece was made by the British Government. The Greek Prime Minister, who held the present Turkish proposal to be more dangerous for Greece than the arbitration which they had rejected, told our Minister, Mr. Corbett, that he based all his hopes of Greece acquiring the frontier to which they were entitled on the goodwill and influence of England. It proved impossible to secure for Greece all that she desired, but the struggle to uphold the decision of the Berlin Conference as far as possible in face of the more than lukewarmness of the remaining Powers, was in the main to be conducted by the British

<sup>1</sup> Austrian Prime Minister.

Government, and I was to be its instrument. Lord Granville replied to Prince Bismarck's policy of despair that he still believed that the will of Europe, if duly manifested, would be successful without the actual employment of force,'

though, of course, the greater the number of countries which declined in all possible circumstances to resort to coercion, the less the influence of Europe would be.

'Her Majesty's Government desired to maintain their own liberty of action in this respect, and were unwilling to abandon the decisions of the Congress and Conference at Berlin without seeing their way to a successful result.'

In short, Lord Granville and Goschen were opposed to fresh negotiation, and it was understood that further action at Constantinople would be suspended till Goschen and Count Hatzfeldt had resumed charge of their respective Embassies. The British Foreign Minister was again anxious to press Prince Bismarck to take the lead, and, accordingly, Goschen, fully acquainted with the views of the Home Government, returned to Constantinople via Berlin.

'I looked forward with intense interest to personal contact with the great Chancellor. Very frequently it happens that a stranger who is introduced to a celebrity is disappointed at first sight! It was not so in the case of Prince Bismarck. The man who had loomed so big in my imagination was in every respect as big as my fancy had painted him, and my expectations were entirely fulfilled.'

He was received at Berlin by the British Ambassador, Lord Odo Russell.

'A more perfect diplomatist could not be found. Lord Ampthill's fame is so great that all I need to add here

are words of affectionate remembrance of him as one of the most interesting friends whom I have ever possessed . . . lively, witty, broad-minded, cultured, even-tempered, and with an immense knowledge of men and things. At Berlin he was absolutely invaluable, through his thorough understanding of Bismarck's character and methods and through his tact in managing the sensitive side of the all-powerful Chancellor. In the early eighties caste reigned supreme in the Prussian capital. When on a later visit to Berlin I paid my respects to Prince Bismarck his language as to the plebeian radicals in the Reichsrath was very violent. "They are not gentlemen. They are not people one can meet." Lasker, the leader of the advanced party, fell specially under his lash. (I did not tell him that when I left his house I was going straight to dine with Herr Lasker to meet a party of Liberals, but I dare say he knew my intention, as I was told that the movements of prominent strangers were not unknown to the authorities.) But while "caste" forbade social intercourse with Radicals, Lord Odo was a privileged person and loved on occasion to invite others than the smart set and the official and diplomatic world to his hospitable table. Lady Odo did not belie her origin, possessing all the diplomatic graces of her father, Lord Clarendon, and exercised a charming spell over Berlin circles. The old Emperor was specially devoted to her. "Lady Odo is a pearl," he used to say. I could not have entered on my difficult mission under better auspices.'

The Chancellor at once asked him to dinner, but this invitation had been forestalled by an invitation to dine with the Crown Prince and Princess, with whom the Goschens had become friends during autumn and winter visits in previous years to Ostend, and Pegli on the Riviera. For the Prince he had the highest admiration. He had 'a noble character enshrined in a noble exterior. His very

presence seemed to command respect and affection,' and in a letter to his wife he describes the family party and the kindly welcome they gave him.

'On Sunday at one o'clock I went in uniform to see the old Emperor. He was charming and most agreeable, and spoke wonderfully well for a man of eighty-five. We talked, *sitting*—a good deal about politics for a full half-hour. He told me that Münster<sup>1</sup> had written that we had offered Hatzfeldt<sup>2</sup> a passage in one of our men-of-war with me. . . . Then I was taken to the Empress, whose voice was so mournful that it gave the impression of deep melancholy. At five in the afternoon Hatzfeldt, I, the Foreign Minister, and Dr. Busch (*not* the biographer) dined with Bismarck without dressing. He hates white ties and tail coats as much as —. He reminded me of a country squire in many ways. The big dog was there in full force. A regular German dinner and very enjoyable. Tell — that Bismarck spoke to his servant Engel at dinner just as he does to his butler. "Have you another bottle of this, Engel?" "Of what year is this, Engel?" and so on—a capital host. Bismarck made an excellent dinner but not so good as I expected. He said a number of quaint and good things. Here is a very characteristic specimen. "I rather envy you English statesmen the excitement of the House of Commons. You have the pleasure of being able to call a man a damned infernal scoundrel. Now I can't do that in diplomacy."

At this dinner the fish course had consisted of lampreys, and Bismarck asked Goschen if he knew the German name for them, 'Neun Augen,' from the nine spots on the back; and said that he had once to his shame eaten eighty-one eyes at a sitting. Lord Odo, remembering the fate of a British King, asked if he had no reason to regret the feat. 'Yes,' he said, 'I did regret it.

<sup>1</sup> German Ambassador in London. <sup>2</sup> German Ambassador at Constantinople.

I have often regretted what I have eaten, but never what I have drunk.' 'But have you not been the worse for it?' Then Bismarck described his creed about potations by declaring, 'I did not say I had not been the worse for them; I said I had never regretted them.' He spoke in slow, but good English and apologised for not being familiar with modern English writers, but he knew his Shakespeare and his Sheridan, particularly relishing the scene in the 'School for Scandal' when Charles Surface sells his ancestors' portraits but refuses to part with poor Noll.

The policy to be settled between the two statesmen was the rectification of the Turco-Greek frontier in a form which those two nations would accept. Goschen felt it 'a great privilege to discuss high matters of state with a man whose insight was so clear and quick, whose grasp of detail as well as of principles was so perfect and immediate, and who knew his own mind so absolutely.' The result of the first day's interview was summarised in the telegram Goschen sent to Lord Granville, in which the former expressed a hope that Bismarck would make proposals of what he called 'localisation,' resembling Goschen's own plan of 'contingent coercion,' the substance of which was that the Powers should agree to defend Greece against a Turkish invasion, thus holding out some inducement to Greece to be reasonable. Bismarck was more favourable to Greece than he expected, but could not be counted upon for joining in active measures himself. Goschen describes this interesting interview.

'Bismarck's racy style of speech added much interest to his declaration of policy. We went fully into the question of how the Turks and Greeks should be respectively dealt with. As to Greece he heartily endorsed my sentiment

that no undue pressure should be put upon her, and that the policy of scolding her into prudence could no longer be pursued. "I agree with you, Mr. Goschen," he said. "The Greeks ought not to be bullied (*sic*). The Turks as the stronger Power should be made soft." On my mentioning that the despair of the Greeks might become a very great danger, he exclaimed: "Why not send your ships to the Piraeus?" Apparently he considered this a very proper step, but he did not dissent from me when I pointed out that if we did so, and Greece became still more determined, we should be accused of encouraging her to resist the wishes of Europe and of being disloyal to "the Concert." If other Powers joined we should probably be quite ready to act. But how? That some support should be given to Greece if Turkey should invade her, notwithstanding the prohibition of the Powers, Prince Bismarck was prepared, and even eager, to discuss. He flung out the idea with emphatic rapidity. "If moral support did not suffice, why they must have immoral support." The defence of Athens and the coast was, he said, easy enough, but what could be done if the Turks on land invaded Greece? I replied: "If the Turks moved southward by land we can move northward by sea." This startled him for a moment. But what would Russia say to that? he asked. The answer was obvious that Russia would be with us and the other Powers, but his interjection struck me as odd. He then threw out another suggestion. "If troops could not be landed, at all events Greek troops could be put on board 'our ships,' and landed at vulnerable points, as, for instance, the Dardanelles. That would bring the Turks to reason." This bold idea was apparently not simply the inspiration of the moment. He recurred to it at our second interview, and spoke of forty thousand Greek soldiers being carried on foreign ships.'

The interview was so far satisfactory to Goschen that his plan of having something to offer to Greece, and to

deter Turkey, was accepted by Bismarck as the basis of their understanding, and the idea that a British man-of-war should take Count Hatzfeldt and Goschen to Constantinople pleased the Chancellor and struck his dramatic sense. Unfortunately, the detention of the German Ambassador for a few days longer at Berlin prevented this demonstration taking place. 'Bismarck had been induced to take the lead,' writes Goschen, '... The Concert of Europe was at last to have an authoritative conductor.'

The following day, after the dinner already described, the *pour-parlers* were resumed.

'We passed into an outer room, where we sat in unconventional freedom. Beer and tobacco were not wanting, and the dog lay at the Chancellor's feet. Amidst these genial surroundings we discussed the further development of our plan of campaign. There was no disposition on Prince Bismarck's part to be dictatorial or impatient, and business proceeded with perfect smoothness. But what struck me especially towards the close was the degree of absolute independence with which he did his work. No obligation to communicate with a single colleague. No desire for a moment's quiet reflection. Nor did he suspend his decision, so far as I could see, for a formal reference to the Emperor. When we had brought matters to a point, he turned to the Foreign Minister and Dr. Busch with the words: "Now, gentlemen, you will write," and in my presence he dictated *straight off* a circular to the German Ambassadors at foreign Courts, giving them an abstract of our plans, with instructions to communicate it to the respective Governments to which they were accredited. It turned out subsequently that much hung on the wording of this circular. Doubtless the Prince had carefully examined the draft of what was ultimately known as the "Circular of the 8th of February," but this State paper was composed under the remarkable *undress* conditions I have described. When

the Prince had finished dictating, he turned to the Foreign Minister and wound up the official part of the business with a direction: "To-morrow you must see the Russian, the Austrian, and the Italian Ambassadors, and tell them what has passed. The Frenchman, I undertake myself. (Den Franzosen übernahme ich selbst.)

'The Chancellor conveyed the impression to me that he had Austria and Russia in his pocket, but the timidity of Haymerlé, the Austrian Prime Minister, inspired him with some alarm. "Haymerlé," he said, "is a man who says 'No' three times in the morning when he wakes up, lest he should have committed himself to something in his dreams." I had ample evidence subsequently of the timidity and vacillation of the Austrian Premier during the negotiations which were about to ensue.'

As before, the results of the day's conversation were summarised in Goschen's telegram to Lord Granville. Bismarck had agreed to take the initiative and induce the Ambassadors at Constantinople to take a new line, giving to Greece as much territory as was settled at the Berlin Conference, but substituting Crete for a portion of Epirus, where the Albanian Mussulmans would prove a source of danger. This policy became known as the policy of compensation. The assent of Greece was to be obtained first, and she was to be assured of the moral support of the Powers. As to further support, though Bismarck admitted the idea, he reserved the 'localisation' project for future consideration. Now, this policy of compensation was an entire departure from the determinations of the Berlin Conference, arrived at by the Powers after the most elaborate inquiries. The rectification of frontier then recommended was not so much for the purpose of aggrandising Greece as for providing a boundary between Turkey and Greece satisfactory as regards racial and strategical considerations.

From this point of view, 'compensation' by way of Crete had nothing to recommend it. Goschen felt that the Powers were engaged in a strange transaction—viz.,

'the assignment of territory by one Power to another, with measures for offence and defence in the background in the event of either not proving tractable; but it must be remembered that the whole object of the negotiations was in the first place the avoidance of war, the limits to which it was impossible to forecast, and in the next the possible wiping out of the smaller State by the stronger Turk as the result of blunders on the part of the European Concert.'

The steps to give effect to the new policy were, first, the agreement to a frontier line by the Ambassadors; secondly, the obtaining the consent to it of Greece. There were to be no further preliminary negotiations with the Turks, for these Goschen believed would lead to dangerous agitation in Greece. Thirdly, the giving of 'immoral' support to Greece against a recalcitrant and aggressive Turkey; but this eventuality Bismarck wished, for the present, to keep in the background.

Bismarck had a strong belief in the importance of the Albanians, especially should the Turkish Empire break up. He had tried in vain, he told Goschen, to get the Austrians to make friends with them, and he appreciated them as the basis of some future ultimate settlement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goschen's own views on this very important question are given in his dispatches to Lord Granville, July 26 and 27, 1880 (Nos. 81 and 83 of Parliamentary Papers. Turkey, No. 7. 1880). After referring to the 'very able dispatches of Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice,' the British representative on the Eastern Roumelian Commission, and pointing out that in readjustments of territory Albanian nationality had hitherto been neglected, he urged strongly that it should not be overlooked in future political combinations. 'I believe Albanian Nationality may be utilised with much advantage to general interests, and I should deprecate any partial measures which would be likely to impede the formation of one large Albanian Province. . . . If a strong Albania should be formed, the excuse for occupation by a Foreign

He disbelieved emphatically in the Bulgarian movement, which Russia had no interest at that time in provoking. Throughout Bismarck spoke with 'an entire absence of reserve during the unforgettable hours spent in his company.'

'You have certainly done a good day's work,' writes Lord Granville (February 10, 1881). 'It is everything to have harnessed the great man to the omnibus, with a premium upon his pride to pull it up the hill. I do not much like Crete, but am reconciled by your ingenious argument. It will be necessary to have some evidence of the wish of the Cretans. Gladstone seems satisfied with the arrangements so far as we know them.'

At Vienna our Ambassador, Sir Henry Elliot, assured Goschen that the *empressé* manner in which he had been received by Royal personages at Berlin, and his interviews with the inaccessible Bismarck, had made quite a sensation in the diplomatic world. Baron Haymerlé he found all that Bismarck had described. He disapproved 'compensation,' and in the strongest terms he deprecated coercion.

Power in the case of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire would be greatly weakened. A United Albania would bar the remaining entrances to the North; and the Balkan Peninsula would remain in the hands and under the sway of the races who now inhabit it. Otherwise the Albanians might be an insuperable difficulty at a time when troubles should arise. A population in great part Mussulman, would be a source of the greatest difficulty to the Slav or Greek countries around it. A European Power alone would be strong enough to deal with them and to keep order. I consider that, in proportion as the Albanian Nationality could be established, the probability of European intervention in the Balkan Peninsula would be diminished.' And in the second dispatch he recurs to the same subject, remarking that occupation of the district by a strong European Power may be the only means of saving it from a state of anarchy dangerous to all Christians interspersed among the Mussulman majority, and that Austria is the European Power to whose lot the duty of keeping some kind of order in the province would naturally fall. In a third dispatch, of August 31, 1880, Goschen informs Lord Granville that he and Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice agreed in not desiring that the Organic Statute elaborated by the Eastern Roumelian Commission should be extended to Albania generally; but the majority of the Commission unfortunately decided the other way.

'I could not quite extract from him whether he would stand a Turkish Fleet in the Piraeus. I was anxious not to let the conversation dwell much on this point, as here Bismarck must clear up the situation.'<sup>1</sup>

In short, Haymerlé was on all points opposed to Bismarck. Whilst the former was thinking of what would content the Turks, 'the latter is now thinking of what will content the Greeks, or at least content them up to the point of preventing either war or revolution.' And Goschen wondered whether the 'policy of the Iron Chancellor or the hesitation of the timid Austrian would prevail.' At Trieste he embarked on board the *Iris*, then the fastest man-of-war in the fleet, which, though not pressed, maintained an average of fifteen knots for a thousand miles—considered quite a feat in those days. She was 'commanded by Captain Seymour as he was then, now Sir Edward Seymour, G.C.B., distinguished not only as a Naval Officer, but as a diplomat who could manage a concert of Admirals in China with a delicate tact which won the high esteem of all his colleagues, and who proved a most charming companion.' At the entrance to the forbidden waters of the Dardanelles Goschen was transhipped into the *Antelope*, and reached Constantinople on Sunday morning, becoming at once immersed in an overwhelming flood of diplomatic business.

Goschen found that the Ambassadors of Austria, France, Russia and Italy were without official information of the new policy, and its acceptance by their respective Governments. Practically they were all pro-Turk: partly because they seriously believed that in the interests of peace it was 'the Turks who must not be bullied' and the Greeks who must 'be made soft'; partly because they were accredited

<sup>1</sup> Goschen to Lord Granville, February 8, 1881.

to the Sultan, and it was therefore important to each one of them to maintain good relations with him ; partly because they were reluctant to take the responsibility of themselves drawing a frontier line. Thus they were opposed to the broad features of the new programme before they knew what it really was. Count Hatzfeldt had not yet arrived ; for some reason or other Bismarck's circular dispatch (which Goschen had seen dictated) had not been communicated to the Powers, so that Goschen felt his position to be an extremely awkward one. The Turkish Ministers were showing a conciliatory disposition, at least in the opinion of Goschen's colleagues at Constantinople, who were ready to regard Greece as lucky if she obtained *any* substantial addition to her territory. On February 15 and 17 Goschen described the situation to Lord Granville. He was maintaining against the ambassadors

'the thesis that we must not start from the present frontier and say how much will the Turks give ; but from the Conference line, and say how much to avoid war can we abate from the line on which we decided before. My present idea is to give Thessaly as far as the heights of Mount Olympus, and Crete as compensation for Epirus and Metzovo ; that is to say the Conference line in Thessaly on the North East. We should begin by being silent about Crete, but asking for Metzovo, Prevesa, and the low lands in Epirus, in fact only leaving out the Sandjak of Janina. The Turks would declare this impossible. Then we should say : Very well, then you must give Crete instead.' The following day Hatzfeldt arrived. 'The Turks are naturally in a state of feverish impatience to know what is to come. Till quite lately they have built their hopes on the Germans to an incredible extent, and as far as my own information goes, they do so still, but Corti<sup>1</sup> tells me that they

<sup>1</sup> The Italian Ambassador.

have received accounts from Berlin which have alarmed them.'

Turkey, as usual, was relying on the belief that the Powers were not thoroughly agreed, that Germany and Austria especially would be easily satisfied, and that no pressure beyond mere words was to be feared for a minute. The Turks were genuinely desirous of a peaceful settlement, which at that time was of immense importance to them, and the Sultan, in a personal interview, impressed upon Goschen that Great Britain now had it in her power to give to Turkey a striking proof of her friendship; to which the British Ambassador replied that to accept a solution, in appearance favourable to Turkey, would be no real kindness if it were to lack the all-important quality of permanence. The best service which Great Britain could render to Turkey would be to provide a lasting settlement of the frontier question. The Sultan, whilst speaking plainly and at times pathetically, was in manner always quiet and courteous.

'It was a strange and somewhat distressing position,' Goschen observes in a letter to his wife, 'for the Ambassador of a friendly Power to urge in personal conversation with the Sovereign of a great Empire that it was his duty to part with two fair provinces for the sake of peace and in deference to the decision of Europe. It would be best on such occasions if one were not cursed with too obtrusive an imagination.'

If only the Turks could be impressed with our disinterestedness!

'That was our chief hope of gaining influence. How often during the course of my mission did I deplore the results of that brilliant stroke of Lord Beaconsfield which

secured Cyprus to us as a British possession. It prevented British Ambassadors from showing "clean hands" to the Sultan in proof of the unselfishness of British advice.'

The consultations of the Ambassadors tended to show that Goschen was the only one who looked after the interests of the Greeks.

'Hatzfeldt was the next best, as he was bound by his instructions; but no one would guess Bismarck's real programme as revealed to me from Hatzfeldt's attitude towards his colleagues. He conceals some points entirely.'<sup>1</sup>

It was Goschen's main complaint that the German Ambassador never gave the slightest hint that under certain circumstances resort might be had to something more than moral support to Greece. Goschen sent home voluminous dispatches and letters, and was by no means satisfied, when he was longing to have his hands strengthened, by the replies from the Foreign Office that everything was left to his discretion. Lord Granville, however, did urge Bismarck, through Lord Odo Russell, to direct Hatzfeldt to act in the spirit of the Chancellor's language to Goschen, and then it transpired that Bismarck was himself very desirous that neither a 'localisation,' nor any measures beyond moral suasion, should be referred to till it became evident that war could no longer be prevented. 'This deprived us in my opinion of the only weapon by which to extract satisfactory terms for Greece.'

All this was, of course, very disappointing to Goschen. There may have been something in the view that the Greek Government would be content to be forced. Certainly the Ambassadors showed themselves quite indifferent to Greek interests so long as enough was secured to save the king

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mrs. Goschen.

from a revolution. They now proceeded to invite the Turks themselves to state what they would consider a reasonable basis for further negotiations. This was opposed to the procedure upon which Bismarck and Goschen had agreed at Berlin; but the latter, unwilling to destroy the unanimity of the Ambassadors, consented, a good deal against the grain, to the step. The Turks fell back on their usual dilatory courses, not sending any reply to the Ambassadors' Note of February 21 till March 3.

'In the midst of my perplexities and unable to descry an outlet from the dangerous embroil, I conceived a daring idea. The island of Cyprus had been brought back in triumph by Mr. Disraeli from the famous negotiations with Turkey in 1878, and handed to the British people. It was not a valuable trophy in itself, and it was not the memorial of specially clean-handed dealing. Financially it was a failure, administratively an embarrassment through the liabilities assumed by us in the deed of gift, fraught with future dangers—from the point of view of policy, of doubtful international morality. In the year of which I am writing, it appeared of little if any use to England, while to the Turkish mind it presented a painful retrospect wrapt in a mist of suspicion. Could this doubtful gift, I reflected, be utilized in any way to assist towards a peaceful solution of the pending strife? Might it afford the opportunity to England of a splendid act of disinterested renunciation, for which the Great Powers, Turkey and Greece might be equally grateful; Europe being saved from the apprehension of war; Turkey being indemnified for full frontier concessions by the restoration of a valued possession; Greece being saved from the fear of revolution by an adequate settlement of her aspirations, whilst we ourselves should be freed from liabilities as to the support of Turkey in Asia Minor, which under certain conditions might prove extremely embarrassing?'

This startling idea Goschen broached in a 'very secret letter' to Lord Granville,<sup>1</sup> who replied that the proposal did not altogether 'smile upon him at present; he did not think it unwise, but we had to pay some attention to public opinion. He would talk it over with some of the cooler heads of the Cabinet.' The 'cooler heads,' it seems, did not see their way. Unsuccessful operations in South Africa, particularly the defeat at Majuba Hill on February 28, and the peace that followed it, quickly produced an effect on British opinion absolutely fatal to an evacuation policy in any part of the world, and nothing came of the project.

In truth the political situation at this time in England was in the highest degree unsatisfactory and difficult. Mrs. Goschen's letters to her husband from London reflect the general discouragement. A Royal Princess had told her with tears in her eyes that she had never seen the Queen so depressed. 'She was miserable about everything. No one speaks of the Eastern Question here.' What with military disasters in South Africa, and Ireland almost in a state of semi-revolution, the Cabinet had much to think of besides the Eastern Question and the enforcement of the Berlin mandate. Lord Granville, however, backed Goschen loyally. At Constantinople the proceedings of the Ambassadors meanwhile dragged as the Turks procrastinated, and Goschen occasionally waxed warm in discussion with his colleagues when they suggested their powerlessness to do anything but conform to Turkish requirements.

'If that is the case,' he said, 'our whole proceedings are wrong. If the general tone of the Ambassadors is that Europe is in the hands of the Turk, that is an attitude perfectly inconsistent with our instructions, and now we see how difficult it is to return on the right track. The intention

<sup>1</sup> February 25, 1881.

of the Powers in accepting Prince Bismarck's instructions was certainly not to spend time on long negotiations. Count Hatzfeldt remained very silent, but finally whispered to me, "if we were to attempt to draw up a line at this moment it is questionable whether we should all agree"; an interesting clue to the situation.'

In their private relations, however much they may have differed with each other in political discussions, the Ambassadors were a happy family. In their social gatherings and their frequent dinners at each other's Embassies, the greatest bonhomie and gaiety prevailed. Hatzfeldt was devoted to lawn tennis, and was heard to rejoice, when a spell of wet weather occurred, that *now* there would be time to attend to business! Count Corti<sup>1</sup> 'was an able diplomatist and knew it,' and his own strong individuality seemed sometimes to count for even more than the wishes of the Government he represented. Count Tissot,<sup>2</sup> with the gay spirits and bright tongue of his race, was a charming member of Society. None the less, when the time came, he proved himself 'a most able draftsman,' capable of throwing rapidly into perfect form the points agreed upon by the Ambassadors. These two were of the greatest use in the literary labours of the diplomatists; for at length the Governments agreed to give the necessary general authority to their representatives. 'We set to work,' says Goschen, 'with great energy, and our intimate *camaraderie* now stood us in good stead. Thus all went forward rapidly and smoothly. The Concert of Europe was at work without a jarring note.' The necessity of constant reference to the half-dozen Cabinets, and of consultation between these Cabinets, was avoided when once sufficient authority

<sup>1</sup> Italian Ambassador.

<sup>2</sup> French Ambassador.

had been entrusted to the men on the spot. But we are anticipating, and Goschen had to go through a period of much strain and difficulty before this satisfactory stage of his mission was reached.

Early in March Server Pasha and Ali Nizami Pasha were appointed by the Turks to confer with the Ambassadors, and Goschen was naturally anxious before these conferences began to know the precise line that Germany meant to take, and how far his own Government would authorise him to insist on the policy agreed upon at Berlin, even if unsupported by the other Powers. On reference to Berlin, Lord Granville ascertained that Bismarck was not in a good humour, and 'was grumbling at the Ambassadors for not supporting Hatzfeldt and following a line of their own.' Lord Granville smoothed down the Prince by assuring him that this view was his own, and that the British Government were anxious to give him strenuous support if he would only persist. Accordingly, Bismarck promised Lord Odo Russell to instruct Hatzfeldt to agree with Goschen on a frontier line, and then to put pressure on the other Powers to assent to it, and on Greece to accept it. Italy was anxious in every way to support Great Britain, and her Ambassador was instructed accordingly, very little to the satisfaction of Count Corti. 'I don't mind receiving my orders from Downing Street,' he said to Goschen, 'but I don't care to have them from the "Wilhelm-strasse"'; for he did not at all approve the *entente* between London and Berlin. Lord Granville next bent his energies to the bringing Russia and Austria into line.

Goschen, in letters to Lord Granville, complained in language of the utmost frankness that he was not kept informed from home of the views of Her Majesty's Government. It was all very well to assure him of the confidence

the Cabinet reposed in his conduct. His position at Constantinople, he felt, was becoming one of isolation. Had he the direct approval of his Government behind him? His language to Mrs. Goschen was more vehement but not less explicit than that which he used to his chief.

'I am furious with Granville. Not a line from him by the last Messenger—that is the second time. Indeed, I have only had the scrap from him which I sent you since I arrived. I shall write him a stinger, at least I feel so at present. Not a hint, or advice, or suggestion, or criticism, or sketch of politics. Nothing! The whole responsibility is to be thrown on me. I have bothered him once or twice lately by telegrams, to which he sent no reply. The Ambassadors here are not carrying out the programme faithfully; but, contrary to the spirit of it, are really negotiating with the Turks alone. Hatzfeldt supports his master's programme languidly, but I with much energy. I have been practically opposed to them all. Here is the whole story: We are to propose a line. The Ambassadors are frightened at the responsibility. They won't do anything without seeing how far the Turks will go. Peace or War will practically rest with England. But Lord Granville leaves all "to my judgment and discretion." Therefore everything depends on me. The Turks will not give much, but I am inclined to believe the Greeks are getting frightened and will put up with less than they pretend. They want to be forced (like a woman says the improper Tissot). . . . I think there will be no war. The Powers will accept a very moderate line and will persuade Greece to accept it. That is my present view.'

It is unnecessary to give here the letter to his chief dated March 8—'the stinger'—as it goes over the same ground. Goschen himself declares in his narrative that Lord Granville might well have thought it 'somewhat petulant.' The latter's replies are written with admirable tact and

temper. Practically he has, he says, given Goschen all the information he could get.

‘The French tell Lyons<sup>1</sup> they can only explain Hatzfeldt’s half-and-half attitude by supposing that Bismarck does not really wish to prevent the war. . . . My language to Münster and Ampthill has been that our only object is success, and that we will give all the support in our power to the Chancellor if he will persist in his endeavours—that we are ready if he should think it expedient to take a leading part in pressing Greece, if you and Hatzfeldt can agree on a satisfactory line—that which I should prefer would be Thessaly and Prevesa, with or without payment for the latter. But Gladstone has always had a fancy for Crete. He is, however, perfectly reasonable. I saw Mrs. and Miss Goschen looking very well indeed last night. I hope you are not over-tiring yourself without these stern warders.’ ‘The last allusion,’ comments Goschen, ‘is a pretty touch; if those stern warders guarding me against overwork had still been with me at Constantinople, would my letters have been so horribly voluminous, and their tone occasionally irritable? Who knows?’

‘I do not object to being scolded,’ writes Lord Granville on March 17, in reply to the letter of March 8. ‘It is wholesome and instructive. But I own I rather winced at the idea of the scolding coming through the Austrian post office [the seal had been broken], but I am not sure you do not apply the rod too severely.’

He had had no useful criticisms to make. He would invent one if he could, but so far he was at a loss to make one. Goschen had seen Bismarck, and had inoculated him with the ideas which he—Granville—and Goschen had previously talked over. Since then he had done what he could to support Bismarck and to guide the Powers. As for

<sup>1</sup> British Ambassador at Paris.

the policy of the latter, he had been as unable to fathom it as Goschen, or 'the great Bismarck himself.'

'You ask how far we will go as to compulsion. The Cabinet is overworked just now and will not pay attention to hypothetical cases. But my impression is that they will not hesitate supposing the Greeks agree, and the Turks refuse, to go as far as Germany will act with them, and even alone, if they have the moral support of the Powers.'

By the genial tone and clear language of his chief Goschen was appeased. No single jar ever again disturbed their relations. 'I now felt the ground firm under my feet, and no longer shrank from accepting the fullest responsibility.' As he looked back at their correspondence, he even felt that a verdict might well be given in favour of Lord Granville;

'but there can be no question that for an agent, however trusted, a knowledge of the inmost mind of him on whose behalf he is acting is an invaluable support; and on other occasions in my political career I have been somewhat exacting in endeavouring to extract that support from my chiefs.'

Goschen's energies were now required to keep the Greeks in check. They were furious, as he had anticipated, that the Powers should be in consultation with the Turks, at meetings from which they were excluded, as to departing from a frontier line formally promised them by Europe. It was mainly to the British nation that they looked to defend their interests. The Turkish delegates as usual acted upon the approved principles of Turkish diplomacy: interminable procrastination and delay. When Goschen suggested that the Ambassadors would be ready to sit twice a day to listen to the Turkish proposals, Server Pasha replied, 'Surely it is

twice a week that you mean.' Nevertheless, though there were frequent interruptions and adjournments, the Turks argued their case with temper and ability. They were willing to contemplate 'compensation,' that is, the cession of Crete in substitution for any alteration of their continental frontier; but when Count Hatzfeldt, who presided at these conferences, suggested Crete as a possible compensation for Epirus only, with certain reservations as to Prevesa, the delegates stood their ground; *une cession continentale ou insulaire, mais pas les deux à la fois.* Lengthy arguments followed. The personal feelings of the Ambassadors leant strongly to the Turkish side. Indeed, Count Tissot said that, as regards one of the Turkish offers, four and a-half Ambassadors were for accepting it and one and a-half for its rejection, Goschen constituting the minority, whilst Hatzfeldt was divided in half between the two sides. Lord Granville, however, had made great and successful efforts to get stringent instructions sent to the French and Italian Ambassadors, and therefore Tissot and Corti, whatever may have been their private feelings, could not formally take part against Goschen. They did not, however, *look pleased!* As for the Russian Ambassador—M. Novikoff—he was the most timid of the whole half-dozen. Apparently he was but vaguely instructed, and cared little what was done so long as peace was preserved. Bismarck, whatever may have been his real object, now appeared to think that the best plan would 'be to accept from the Turks what we could get,' and Hatzfeldt therefore brought no help to Goschen's efforts.

'The situation was peculiar. The Ambassadors were personally opposed to their own instructions, two were sore and silent and the appointed leader was disinclined to lead. Hatzfeldt did, however, loyally press the Turks to improve

their offer ; and informed them that in default of satisfactory proposals the Ambassadors had full authority themselves to propose a line.'

The news of the assassination of the Czar came at this time as a great shock to the Ambassadors and to the Sultan. Constantinople was no stranger to assassination plots, and the Sultan became more than ever afraid of offending his subjects by a great surrender of territory. He hoped to get off with the cession of Crete alone, and the Turkish delegates had an unhappy time of it between the pressure of the Ambassadors and the wrath of the Sultan, who declared that he would rather make war than ' pull out all the hairs of his beard, which he would be doing if he gave up Larissa, Metzovo, and Prevesa or Janina.' The delegates could not be got to offer more than a mere shred of territory in Thessaly. The Greeks would of course be furious, and it was by no means clear that the Powers were ready to compel the Turks to hand over even this small territory. Lord Granville pointed out to the Powers that if the line accepted was very unsatisfactory it might be impossible for the British to put pressure on the Greeks. But where did the great Bismarck now stand as regards the all-important question of ulterior measures ? The Prince was in no good humour.

' He had found by experience,' he told Lord Ampthill, ' that Constantinople was at all times a peculiar place, in which the Powers never seemed to have their Representatives in hand, as at other posts, so that he thought it more prudent not to let the Representatives know too much at a time. He was in favour of proceeding step by step and dealing singly with each difficulty as it arose,'

which reserve Goschen considered a great mistake, believing

that the possible recourse to more than moral pressure would have opened a way out of most of their difficulties.

On March 19 the delegates presented their last proposals; but the patience of the Ambassadors was at length exhausted. They refused to accept them, and then proceeded themselves to draw a frontier line. It was no easy task. The Ambassadors were all at sixes and sevens! Hatzfeldt declared that Crete was an indispensable part of the Chancellor's plan, whilst Goschen contended that a cession of Thessaly, almost to the Berlin Conference line, was even more indispensable to that plan on which Bismarck and he had agreed. The Sultan, if he yielded Crete, meant to concede nothing more.

'Whilst Count Hatzfeldt threatened Germany's displeasure if Crete was dropped, I pictured in lurid colours the resentment of Greece and the Hellenic population if Thessaly, on which they had set enthusiastic hopes, were abandoned, with its probable fatal consequences' ;

and so something very like a deadlock was reached. Hatzfeldt and the other Ambassadors thought war very near indeed.

From Vienna came disconcerting news. Austria, wrote Sir Henry Elliot to Lord Granville, was prepared to play the part of mediator and no more, and Lord Granville's forcible rejoinder to Austria that she and other Powers were fully committed to a large rectification of the frontier as proposed at the Berlin Conference appears to have produced little effect. 'The language from Berlin became more and more unsatisfactory. Practically Austria and Germany were prepared to throw up the sponge.' Bismarck, in conversation with Lord Ampthill, declared that to avoid war the Ambassadors must take, not what they wanted, but

what they could get the Turks to give. He did not believe Austria or Russia would support England in coercive measures to secure better terms for Greece, 'and he himself could only support a pacific solution, as he had said from the beginning.' This was not the tone of the Chancellor's conversation at Berlin, comments Goschen, 'when he cheerfully suggested the embarkation of 30,000 Greek troops on board British ships in furtherance of a common desire for exerting more than moral pressure.'

Whilst matters were in this most critical position, the Sultan suddenly took up entirely new ground. Probably the Turks were at last really alarmed at the prospect of the Ambassadors themselves fixing the line of frontier for themselves; but whatever may have been their reasons, they made a complete *volte face*, and themselves proposed to cede on the mainland Thessaly with Volo and Larissa, and territory even to the north of the Peneus; in fact, the Turks were now suggesting the settlement previously advocated by Baron Haymerlé, to which he had invited the consent of the Powers. But would Bismarck any longer insist upon Crete? If so, what would the British Government say? At Constantinople the parts were strangely reversed, and it was Hatzfeldt not Goschen who now ran the risk of being isolated! All the Ambassadors believed that a mixed solution, that is, substantial cessions on the mainland *plus* the surrender of Crete, could only be exacted from the Turks by the exercise of force. Tissot reported that the Sultan had shown great anger at the bare idea of surrendering Crete and even the smallest portion of Thessaly, ejaculating 'Volo never with Crete. I know that Turkey is condemned by Europe, but the Will of God will decide.' Nevertheless, Hatzfeldt stood to his guns, and declared that without Crete the German lead would go.

Goschen was inclined to attach to this threat less importance than Lord Granville, who necessarily had to take a wider view of international politics as a whole than was possible to the Ambassador at Constantinople. According to Lord Ampthill, the Chancellor had put his foot down, and Goschen was by no means convinced that Lord Granville would not yield. At this critical moment, when telegrams were flying backwards and forwards between Constantinople and the Foreign Office, our Ambassador received another and most welcome surprise. On March 26 Hatzfeldt had called upon him to say that he felt enabled to take a step in advance. He was prepared, he said, to discuss a purely continental solution. Then, summoning the Ambassadors, he once more took the chair. There was no further talk about Crete.

‘On this all difficulties vanished. We sank our differences, and sent identic telegrams to our Governments recommending the acceptance of the Turkish proposals, with the addition of the cession of Punta, the razing of the fortifications of Prevesa, and the free navigation of the Gulf of Arta.’

Lord Granville’s letters to Goschen complimented him on the singular ability and discretion that he had shown, whilst they did not conceal the wish that it had been possible without war to have secured a still more favourable settlement for Greece in accordance with the decision of the Conference at Berlin. Lord Ampthill’s letter to Lord Granville of a later date, when these re-arrangements of territory took final form, rated more highly the success that had been achieved.

‘The cession of a beautiful province like Thessaly by one country to another without coercion, bloodshed, or loss of life, and by the sole power of moral persuasion, is a novel

and unique achievement, and does the greatest honour to the concerted diplomacy of Europe, inaugurated and led by Her Majesty's Government with so much ability, tact and patience.'

'Bismarck is sulky over Crete,'<sup>1</sup> wrote Lord Granville. Goschen says in his narrative that the Chancellor's chagrin was great, and that the failure of his plan was supposed long to rankle in his memory, and Lord Ampthill a year afterwards wrote to Lord Granville that 'Prince Bismarck has never forgotten or forgiven Goschen's departure from the advice he was asked to give on the Greek question.' However that may have been, Goschen records that nothing could have been more friendly than the Chancellor's manner to him as he travelled home through Berlin, showing not the slightest trace of ill-humour either then or when in later years he enjoyed his genial hospitality.

'I have often wondered,' writes Goschen, 'while recording this long diplomatic struggle whether the reader, judging by subsequent events in Crete, will question the wisdom of the purely continental solution, which was due in great part to my action. What infinite trouble to all the Powers would have been saved, and what insurrections, what naval demonstrations would have been avoided, if the Island had been ceded to Greece in 1881. Yes, but what would have happened in Thessaly . . .? Look at Macedonia! What was feared for Thessaly has been exemplified in Macedonia in the most lurid light. The racial feuds in Thessaly in 1881 were much fiercer than those in Crete; they were indeed at boiling point, and if the Greek population could be with difficulty restrained after our award, the rage of disillusion at a worse settlement would have been uncontrollable. Before Thessaly would have quieted down, the torch lit at the bonfire of the broken

<sup>1</sup> Granville to Goschen, April 1, 1881.

promises of the Berlin Protocol would, as we firmly believed, have set the whole Balkan Peninsula on fire. History, the stern *ex post facto* judge, has, I venture to think, not proved us to have been in the wrong.'

It was now time to put pressure on Greece, and whenever, throughout these long-drawn-out discussions, the question arose as to the precise means by which pressure should be applied to a recalcitrant Turkey or Greece, the unanimity of the Concert began to totter. Greece had had every reason to hope for Epirus; but Epirus was to be left to Turkey. Who was formally to announce to Greece the unpalatable decision of Europe? France was at that time out of favour with Greece, and accordingly the French Foreign Minister suggested that England should take the lead; but of all the Powers, as we have seen, England was the one that was least satisfied with the non-fulfilment of Greek expectations. Neither did Lord Granville wish, after all that had happened, to press Prince Bismarck to take the lead. In his mind the point to insist on was unanimity on the part of the Powers in presenting their proposals to Greece. At this stage, the appearance of leadership amongst them was of little importance. Whilst the Cabinets were deliberating, Hatzfeldt

'sought out Goschen (April 2) in a rather urgent manner. I asked him whether he had news from Berlin. He answered: "Not news exactly, only an exchange of appreciations." I could elicit nothing about instructions, but soon became convinced that though Prince Bismarck would not himself propose a form of communication for Athens, yet in view of no Government being willing to take the first step, he had directed Count Hatzfeldt to induce the Ambassadors, with as little show of initiation on his part as possible, to supply the basis of a communication to the Greek Govern-

ment which the Cabinets might then adopt. And he asked me to see him again late that night.'

Goschen, in unconventional language, describes the situation to his wife.

'The Greek business is coming to a crisis. None of the Cabinets would take the initiative. Bismarck sulked, but is desperately afraid for the safety of the King of Greece, so he has suborned Hatzfeldt to get us to concoct a Note for presentation to Greece. We are to do the work of the Cabinets and for the time, as I say, act as Foreign Ministers for our respective countries. All our Governments, England included, seem helpless. Well we have prepared the Note, and telegraphed it to-day, and we think it a very fine one. Hatzfeldt has pressed us from hour to hour. Very energetic, but assuring us, what was clearly a taradiddle, that he had no instructions, that he would probably be hanged, etc., etc. Things look very black in Greece; and only tremendous pressure will keep them quiet. I say equal pressure must be put on Turkey too. . . . If possible on both, and if approved, at once to be telegraphed by us to Athens; as they are talking there of a revolution in the course of this week. . . . On Saturday night we sat from ten till two-thirty; and on Sunday morning Corti came to see me whilst still in bed, and Tissot whilst I was dressing.'

The point of the Note, which was approved by the Cabinets, and sent to Greece by the Ambassadors, was the formal substitution of the frontier settlement of the Ambassadors for that decreed by the Conference at Berlin. It was to be taken as the decision of Europe, and the Cabinets expressed the hope that as such the Greek Government would accept it. A refusal would alienate the sympathies of Europe, would place on them increased responsibilities, and expose Greece to complete isolation.

And it wound up with a clause introduced at the instance of Goschen that

'if, as they firmly hope, Greece, taking into account the exigencies of the situation and the unanimous wish of Europe, whose decided will it is to maintain peace, accepts the solution adopted by the Cabinets, the mediating Powers engage to watch over its execution, so as to facilitate to the Greek Government the acquisition of the territory comprised in the new frontier.'

The dignity of the Foreign Ministers at Athens was not a little hurt at the settlement of such questions behind their backs, and they were afraid that the Greek Government would hardly be strong enough to resist the pressure of excited public opinion. That Government acted, however, with prudence, accepted the will of Europe, and looked to Europe itself to see its terms at once given effect to.

'I hope,' wrote Lord Granville on April 8, 'that all sensible people in Greece will want to accept it. . . . I wish we had tackled the Greek frontier before the overflowing of the Tunis affair. It was a ticklish question for us. We were supposed to have gained an immense diplomatic victory in 1878, establishing, in opposition not only to the French but to the Italians, that Tunis was a part of Turkey. We do not wish that the *status quo* should be disturbed, but we do not see why we should bear the brunt of the struggle, as we should not wish to renew the fruitless and rather silly opposition to the French taking Algiers.'

Goschen had taken some friends to see the Salamlik (the state procession of the Sultan from the Palace to the Mosque). The Sultan, noticing him, sent his private secretary to invite him to an interview at the Palace directly after the ceremony. There he found himself received with much courtesy and friendliness. All the

more did Goschen feel bound to be almost painfully frank as to the part he had played in the recent discussions. The Sultan then turned to Tunis, which Goschen suspected was the real cause of His Majesty's wishing to see him. The British Ambassador was entirely uninformed as to how his Cabinet regarded that question, and this was all the answer he could give when the Sultan asked him, 'secretly and personally,' what was the opinion on that subject of Her Majesty's Ministers. He did indeed say that his Government would have preferred the *status quo*. But there was something that must have sounded like irony in the use of this expression to the Sultan. 'Who would be more in favour of the *status quo* than he. His difficulty was that the French were forcibly breaking up the *status quo*.' These difficulties had arisen at a most inappropriate moment. As is natural, Goschen's frankest expression of opinion is found in the letters to his wife. On the eve of his departure from Constantinople he wrote:

'I shall be glad to be rid of the Tunis business, as to which I can scarcely keep my temper. The French seem to me to have behaved abominably and I can scarcely suppress my feelings. I said to Tissot, "I shall not be an Ambassador for more than a fortnight or so, and then you shall know what I think." The French, so timid about Greece that they would not risk firing a shot, spoiling all by their extreme timidity, are now bullying and outraging the Porte without remonstrance from anybody. I have sent, however, a neat little ironical dispatch on the subject. I wonder whether it will be published!'

'My chief took the matter more quietly and sensibly; and on May 13 wrote the following pithy and characteristic letter. "A Cabinet about Tunis. . . . As to that question, we think Cyprus and the language of Lord Salisbury, leaves little ground under our feet to take a

strong attitude. We only insist on our Treaty rights, and proper treatment of foreign subjects, creditors, and trade."

When Goschen got home he was still burning with indignation about Tunis. His vehemence was moderated by the counsels of his wise chief. It would be incongruous with his late position to make an aggressive speech, said Lord Granville, and it might give the impression that Goschen was 'acting with Churchill and Co., whose only object seemed to be the getting up of a state of bad relations between England and France.' Thus the compromising speech was never delivered. 'Cyprus again,' I said to myself! 'We are not clean handed.'

When the Greek answer was received, Hatzfeldt, as *doyen*, summoned the Ambassadors, and in answer to their identic telegrams, they were at once authorised by their respective Governments to deal with the situation. Then it was that at last the Ambassadors set to work with great and united energy to bring about a happy result, to which the excellent personal relations existing between them largely contributed.

The Ambassadors drafted the answer to the Greek Note, and sent another Note to the Porte. Both were approved.

'I doubt,' wrote Goschen to his wife,<sup>1</sup> 'whether Ambassadors have ever in diplomacy taken so much upon themselves. We are now imposing our *will* on Greeks and Turks in very decided language. It has been sharp work. . . . Hatzfeldt has come out much stronger and pushes us on as fast as he can, anxious not to lose an hour. . . . On Saturday we had a quiet friendly dinner for Ford<sup>2</sup>; on Monday I had Hatzfeldt, Corti, Calice, Condoriotis, and

<sup>1</sup> April 19, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Clare Ford, afterwards the Rt. Hon. Sir F. Clare Ford, was at Constantinople on his way to Athens, where he had just been appointed Minister.

St. John—very Ambassadorial and Greek. I never saw Hatzfeldt so amusing, chaffing Condoriotis immensely. The latter was in excellent spirits and believed in peace.'

It looked as if at last the end had been reached; but the Turks, as usual, found reason for delay, and it was not till May 2 that they sent their final acceptance of the line, and announced their readiness to draw up a convention to give it effect.

'I had a historical dinner last night,' Goschen wrote to Mrs. Goschen on May 3. 'The Ambassadors dined with me, and in the middle of dinner the Note—the long expected Note—came by which the Turks expressed their full and unqualified acceptance of our proposals. There! It is done. We have not worked for nothing; but D.V. have achieved a great success. I have been delayed from week to week, but it is something, is it not? to have helped as much as I have done to settle a question which has baffled all Europe so long. My colleagues were so pleased, so immensely pleased! We drank a glass of champagne to our own health, and every kind of joke was made. In the gay chaff which went round the table I was not spared a sly dig reminding me of the protesting attitude of Her Majesty's Government towards the terms of the award. They said that I was maintaining a *mécontentement officiel*, but that I was as pleased as any of them. Certainly I was pleased.'

Lord Granville telegraphed and wrote his heartiest congratulations, adding, 'Ten years hence you will be very glad to have been at Constantinople, but unfortunately I shall not be alive to tell you so.' Even yet the Turks managed to make a few days' more delay, but the work was accomplished, and by the end of May Goschen was on the way home with the Convention in his pocket.

On July 20, at Ripon, Goschen related to his constituents the result of his mission. The Ambassadors and the Cabinets of the six Powers had understood each other, and had loyally co-operated in their desire to preserve the peace of Europe. The success achieved was very largely due to the tact and firmness of Lord Granville. But the difficulties had been great. An imprudent hint or suggestion from any one of the Powers, or of their Ambassadors, would have ruined everything. It was not without importance that the Ambassadors had themselves personally been on such excellent terms. 'We were social. We were fast friends. Some of us played lawn tennis together. Others rode, and we all dined together; and the more critical the moment the more assiduously we dined.' In his wildest flights of fancy, he said, he had never foreseen his becoming the Special Ambassador of the Queen accredited to the Sublime Porte, and the whole tone of his speech shows that his exceptional experiences of the past year had been as enjoyable to himself as they had proved useful to his country. There was now ample field for his energies at home.

## CHAPTER VIII

### POLITICAL PARTIES

ON his return to England Goschen had to make acquaintance with a very different House of Commons from the one that had preceded it. His position in his own Party had undergone a change. In the previous Parliament he had acted whilst in opposition in close consultation with Lord Hartington and Lord Granville, who had led the Liberal Party in the two Houses after the retirement of Mr. Gladstone, and the fact that he differed with them as to the expediency of assimilating the county and borough franchise had in no degree interfered with their constant and hearty political co-operation.

The great Liberal majority of 1880 was beyond all doubt mainly due to the personality of Mr. Gladstone. In a singular degree the Liberal cause had come to be personified in the candidate for Midlothian. The enthusiasm kindled in Scotland spread throughout the whole kingdom. To begin with there were in the south not a few grumblers and hangers-back, who maintained that for the sake of winning half a dozen seats in Radical Scotland the less robust Liberalism of the South was being jeopardised, and that on the whole no Party advantage would be achieved by the 'Midlothian campaign.' Lord Rosebery and Mr. Adam, the popular Liberal 'whip,' knew well what

they were about, and as the contest for the Scottish county proceeded, it was plain that very rarely had Liberals of every section, from 'Old Whig' to 'Advanced Radical,' in every part of the country, been more thoroughly and enthusiastically united. In a series of great speeches Gladstone denounced the whole spirit and substance of that foreign policy which for a time had dazzled the public, condemned the poverty and even imposture of Tory statesmanship as regards the domestic affairs of the people, and urged as of vital importance a return to public economy and sound methods of finance. These speeches, if we may quote the words three years later of Mr. Chamberlain,<sup>1</sup> contained 'the whole body of Liberal faith and doctrine.'

It was once said with some humour and truth by Lord Bowen that there was always something zymotic about Mr. Gladstone's politics. No statesman of our time was more capable of nursing into flame, and then blowing to furnace heat the first slumbering sparks of an agitation. His words in the county of Edinburgh were warm with the glow of passion; but for all that his speeches in their substance were those not of an agitator but of a great and high-minded statesman, and men who read them in the present day may perhaps feel surprised at the moderation of his Liberalism, and at the completeness with which he kept himself free from subscribing to the then shibboleths of the Radical caucus. Goschen would certainly have placed more confidence in a leader of the strong judgment and cool temperament of Lord Hartington than in one whose impulses at times seemed to get the better of the reasoning and reflective faculties which ordinarily governed him. There was, however, nothing in the Midlothian speeches (setting aside the franchise question) to

<sup>1</sup> At Birmingham, March 30, 1883.

which he had any strong objection, and as regards Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy, his own language was almost as condemnatory as that of Mr. Gladstone himself.

Whatever official arrangements had been beforehand and however uncompromising and final had been Mr. Gladstone's intended retirement from the Liberal leadership, the General Election proved to demonstration that as a mere matter of fact he, and not Lord Hartington, led the Party. The latter, whose predilections and personal interests never induced him to see things other than they were, at once loyally accepted the second instead of the first place in the Liberal counsels, and advised the Queen to send for Mr. Gladstone. Yet, though it is true that the great Liberal triumph of 1880 could not have been achieved without Mr. Gladstone, it is none the less true that the solidity of the Party and the possibility of his forming a stable Ministry depended on Lord Hartington. Indeed, at no time since Mr. Gladstone succeeded Lord Russell as Liberal leader could the former have dispensed with the help of Lord Hartington and all that Lord Hartington stood for. And when at length the day came for the two statesmen to take different paths, all Mr. Gladstone's greatness, all his fervour, and all his eloquence led him only to the defeat and the grand fiasco of 1886, and the hardly less humiliating interlude of office of 1892-94.

In the House of Commons of 1880 lay the seeds of future change, and it was not long before the seeds began to germinate. Gladstone had formed a strong Ministry, if its strength was to be inferred from the recognised ability and standing of the individual statesmen composing it. After himself and Lord Hartington, Mr. Forster and the men new to office—Mr. Chamberlain, Sir William Harcourt and Sir Charles Dilke—stood high in reputation in the House of

Commons, whilst in the House of Lords the then unbroken ranks of the Liberal Peers enabled the Prime Minister to utilise the services of such men as Lord Granville and the Duke of Argyll, Lord Kimberley and Lord Selborne, Lord Spencer and Lord Lansdowne. Thus the new Government at its start seemed likely to combine with a spirit of genuine reform a character for moderate and experienced statesmanship. In the House of Commons the majority, though large, was not homogeneous. The Liberal Party never is; at least, in the sense in which homogeneity is possible to their opponents. On the Speaker's right hand, as belonging to the same Party and acknowledging the leadership of Mr. Gladstone, sat many Radicals who were looking forward to sweeping democratic changes under the guidance of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, and many Whigs and moderate men who wished to strengthen the Prime Minister against the pressure upon him which the advanced wing were bringing to bear. To which side would Mr. Gladstone himself finally incline? His own language in Midlothian had been, as we have said, in essentials far from extreme. He had advocated moderate reform; he had opposed Home Rule; he was not in favour of Disestablishment; he would not pledge himself to the Permissive Bill. Mr. Chamberlain, the master of a powerful organisation in the Midlands, and the man to whom extreme Radicals looked in every part of the country, was prepared to go far in the direction of Home Rule; he favoured Disestablishment; he believed in manhood suffrage; he had no patience with the Peers, whom he was in the habit of freely denouncing. In common with Sir Charles Dilke, there had been popularly imputed to him a preference for republican over monarchical institutions. A large part of Mr. Gladstone's following regarded with much alarm the Radicalism and the power of his new and

vigorous lieutenant the member for Birmingham. How would these deep divergencies of political opinion or principle at last work out? The influence which Goschen was now to bring to bear in the House of Commons and in the country was to prove a considerable factor in shaping ultimate results. He stood in an independent position. At the General Election he had spoken to the electors at Ripon of Lord Hartington as his leader. He was himself essentially a moderate Liberal, and before long he was encouraging and assisting men of similar political tendencies to make their weight felt against the constant pressure of the Radical wing.

To the new Government difficulties and troubles, domestic and foreign, came early. The controversy as to the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh, an avowed Atheist who had been elected for Northampton, to take the oath of allegiance was vexatious to the last degree. The religious sentiment of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff and Lord Randolph Churchill had been profoundly shocked at the thought that a man who had no religious belief should 'kiss the book.' Hence arose a parliamentary conflict in its essence contemptible, but which, considered apart from the merits and in the light of an obstructive Party campaign, invites admiration for the genius of those who initiated and conducted it. Mr. Gladstone, in his own House of Commons, fresh from one of the greatest personal triumphs ever achieved in the battle of a General Election, was defeated again and again. His arguments were unanswerable. His eloquence was magnificent. But neither reasoning nor rhetoric could prevail over ignorant prejudice sedulously and very unscrupulously worked in the name of religion, and the prestige of the Ministry seriously suffered.

In the very first Session Mr. Forster's 'Compensation

for Disturbance Clause' in an Irish Relief of Distress Bill, ultimately thrown out by the House of Lords, had shown that in both Houses there were limits beyond which the Whig section of the Ministerialists would not be driven. Lord Lansdowne resigned the Under-Secretaryship for India, and the divisions in the House of Commons showed a large diminution of Government support. In the following year (1881) the Irish Land Bill, with its three 'F's' (Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure, and Free Sale), aroused much distrust amongst old-fashioned Liberals, and caused the resignation of the Duke of Argyll, the most brilliant orator of the House of Lords, and hitherto a devoted adherent of Mr. Gladstone. But even more than by the doubts felt as to the wisdom of the proposed legislation, was the reputation of the Government injured by their failure to uphold the law in Ireland during the winter of 1880-81. The efforts of the Chief Secretary, Mr. Forster, and of Lord Cowper, the Lord-Lieutenant, had been unavailing, and in the Session of 1881 the Government, in spite of the most violent Irish obstruction, felt compelled to pass a Bill for the Protection of Life and Property, which, it must be allowed, did not achieve the success which the Irish Administration had expected from it.

In February in the same year the British troops were defeated at Majuba, and the non-renewal of the war with the Transvaal brought on the Government, justly or unjustly, from many quarters the severest public censure. Thus, before the Ministry had been a year in office disappointment and discontent were taking the place of the triumphant hopes indulged in by Liberals at the time when Goschen started on his mission to Constantinople. The letters he received from friends at home, in and out of office, had reflected the general feeling. Even Lady Hayter, strong

partisan though she was, as became the wife of a Liberal 'whip,' wrote that

'she rather blushed and felt uncomfortable at the Peace, and would willingly have thrashed, punished and been revenged on the Boers, before making terms with them. *But* (there is always a Radical *but*, you will say) history says that the Boers initiated negotiations, previous to the Majuba Mountain battle, and that General Colley acted on his own responsibility, without orders from home and while the terms were being discussed. This makes the policy of the Government quite consistent and upright, though I agree that the moment for peace was a most unfortunate one.'

On which Goschen comments long afterwards: 'knowing my own temperament, I rejoiced I was well out of it.' Mrs. Goschen, writing from London to her husband in Constantinople in the spring of 1881, says that their friends are always congratulating her on her husband's good fortune in being 'out of all these messes' in which the Government is floundering. In June he was home again. What part was he to play?

One thing was certain, viz. that though Goschen had much reason to feel dissatisfied with the conduct of affairs by Mr. Gladstone's Government, there was little to induce him at that time to place confidence in his political opponents, or to throw in his lot with Lord Salisbury. As we have seen, he had been a stern critic of Lord Beaconsfield alike in his home and his foreign policy. But with the fall of his Government at the General Election Lord Beaconsfield had ceased to lead. Mrs. Goschen, writing to her husband at Constantinople on March 18, 1881, just one month before his death, gave a pathetic description of the aged statesman.

'I spoke to Lord Beaconsfield before dinner, and told him you had enjoyed "Endymion." "It is very good of him to

say so." We were standing together, and he asked me who some of the people were—for he said "I am blind and deaf now." I asked him whether he felt the fogs we were having. He said, "I only live for climate, and I never get it." After dinner Lady Northcote and I talked together, and when the men came up, Lord Beaconsfield was the first. He put up his glass and made for our corner. Lady Northcote got up and offered him her chair, but he said, "No. I won't take that, but if Mrs. Goschen will allow me I will sit on the sofa between you,"—so we had him all to ourselves. I was so sorry I had to leave early, but he said, "I am going myself in ten minutes. I never was fit for anything in the evening late. I *live* early, ready for anything in the morning—I am like the birds, alive all day but must rest early—I am dead at half-past ten, and buried by twelve!" He has lost his old spirit and is very aged. He looked brighter after dinner than before, but he is very blind and seemed to me to see nothing with one eye.'

For the time being the Conservative Party was without strong leadership. On the Opposition side of the House of Commons, the Front Bench above the Gangway—Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir Richard Cross and Mr. W. H. Smith—had lost much of its authority, and was treated with hardly disguised contempt by Lord Randolph Churchill and his three friends<sup>1</sup> on the Front Bench below it, who were coming to be mockingly known as the 'Fourth Party.' The 'Third Party,' now a closely compacted band of some two and twenty Irish Nationalists, were led and controlled by Mr. Parnell. Their object was avowed—a separate National Parliament and Executive Government for Ireland. The means by which they sought to achieve it were the rendering impossible the working of a United Parliament for the whole kingdom, and the allying themselves with whichever

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, Mr. John Gorst, and Mr. Arthur Balfour.

of the great British Parties seemed least likely to oppose their approach to Home Rule. Mr. Gladstone's far-reaching land legislation seemed in no degree to lessen the hostility of Mr. Parnell and his followers to the Liberal Government. It was Mr. Parnell's efforts to destroy the working of the new Land Law, and to make the Land League, with its own rules and its own courts, of greater authority than the law of the land, that necessitated the strong measures of coercion to which Mr. Gladstone had recourse and the temporary imprisonment of Irish political leaders. The bitterness of the hostility between the Liberal Ministry and Irish Nationalists was a potent factor in the political situation of 1882-86. How far this could be made use of in the Party interests of Conservatism, without involving that Party too deeply in the projects of Irish Nationalism, was a problem present to the acute and active mind of Lord Randolph Churchill. Neither Lord Salisbury nor Sir Stafford Northcote liked the idea of allying themselves in the lobby with Irish Nationalists. A success so obtained would not be a 'wholesome victory.' But Lord Randolph, as a 'Party man,' was made of sterner stuff. He mocked at 'puritanical theories' of this sort. 'Discriminations between wholesome and unwholesome victories are idle and impracticable. Obtain the victory, know how to follow it up, and leave the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness to critics.'<sup>1</sup>

Lord Randolph's great abilities, his determination at any cost to achieve the supreme Party object of turning Mr. Gladstone out of office, and his influence in the working of Party machinery, gave him during the later years of the Parliament of 1880 a position in the country of exceptional weight on his own side of politics. Amongst individuals, no doubt there were many steady-going Conservatives who

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, vol. i.

profoundly distrusted him; but he had the ruck of his Party enthusiastically with him. He owed his position to himself alone, and his son, in his very brilliant 'Life' of his father, hardly exaggerates when he says that men looked forward to Lord Randolph rather as a future and powerful ally than as a mere lieutenant of Lord Salisbury. Thus it happened that moderate Liberals of that day who disliked the advanced Radicalism of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke felt little drawn to Mr. Gladstone's Conservative opponents, amongst whom it appeared that Lord Randolph Churchill, with his 'Tory democracy' and Parnellite allies, was rapidly gaining more and more influence.

Lord Hartington, though he held the second instead of the first place in the new House of Commons, had not lost in reputation either in the country or in Parliament. He had 'gained immensely,' wrote Mr. George Lefevre from the Admiralty to Goschen at Constantinople, describing the general situation at the end of their first Session, 'by his leadership during Gladstone's absence, and is most popular with all sections of the Party.' In 1881 there was a marked difference between the attitude in debate of Lord Hartington and Mr. Gladstone towards the novel principles of that Irish Land Bill for which they were both responsible. Mr. Gladstone saw in his great measure establishing the three 'F's' a complete settlement of Irish difficulties. By the introduction of a quasi-lease system under the authority of, and on terms fixed by, the State, the business-like relations that prevail in Scotland between landlord and tenant would, he said, come into being, and a short experience of it would induce Irishmen to settle their own business affairs for themselves by free contract for the future. Lord Hartington insisted rather on the necessity of dealing at once with a formidable crisis—an approach to a general strike against

rents—than on the efficacy of rent courts to cure the Irish land question. Landlords and tenants were at war, and arbitration must be called in to fix terms, which for the present the parties could not fix for themselves. Some *modus vivendi*, he urged, must be found; but not to rent courts and to State regulations so much as to the ultimate increase of occupying owners did he look for a permanent improvement in the agricultural situation.

Goschen had not returned to England till the Irish Land Bill of 1881 had got through its principal stages, and he had then no desire to take a prominent part in a controversy which seemed nearly over. His friend and late coadjutor in Turkey, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice,<sup>1</sup> had returned earlier to the House of Commons, and, with Mr. Heneage, Mr. Brand, Mr. W. C. Cartwright, Mr. Albert Grey and several amongst the new Liberal members, had taken an active part in advocating principles of land reform more conformable with the doctrines of Liberalism and Radicalism as hitherto understood than were the projects of Mr. Gladstone, who had somewhat airily just dismissed the precepts of political economy to Jupiter and Saturn.

The Irish Land Bill was fiercely contested. Its principles were novel, and ran almost as counter to the doctrines generally accepted by Liberal land-reformers as to the prejudices of old-fashioned Conservatives. Most Liberals, and philosophical Radicals especially, had always urged the policy of freeing the land from legal fetters and limitations, such as entails and settlements, of making it easily and

<sup>1</sup> Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, M.P. for Calne, had been appointed in 1880 British Commissioner for re-organising the European provinces of Turkey under the Treaty of Berlin, and thus at Therapia and Constantinople Goschen and he saw much of each other. Lord Granville, writing to the former September 9, 1880, says of one who a quarter of a century afterwards was to become his biographer: 'I am delighted to hear of the success of the son of the greatest friend I ever had. He is an excellent and very able fellow.'

cheaply transferable, and of assimilating its devolution to that of personality on the death of the owner. The Cobden Club had issued much excellent literature on the subject of land tenure, the gist of its teaching being the introduction of free commercial dealing between man and man with land as with other things. Here was a proposal to fix prices and to regulate the terms of the bargain not by free contract, but by decree of a State official. In Committee of the House of Commons it soon became evident how strong was the dislike of many Liberals to this new departure; and against the efforts of Mr. Heneage and Lord Edmond Fitz-maurice to exempt from the operation of the Bill 'English managed estates' and the larger farms the Government found some difficulty in securing a majority. When Lord Edmond, on the report stage of the Bill, moved (July 26) an amendment to take tenancies of over £100 rental out of the Fair Rent provisions of the Bill, Goschen followed him into the lobby against the Government. And before Goschen had been many months in England men began to look to him with hope as the leader of moderate Liberals, of whom the influence was in danger of being pushed aside by the energy of the extreme and more self-assertive politicians of the Party.

It was with great pleasure wrote (July 29) Lord Halifax to Goschen, from Hoar Cross, that he saw an old colleague voting to preserve some tenants from the interference with that freedom of individual action which underlay the legislation of the Government.

'It used to be an article of the Liberal creed to get rid of all legislative interference with what men did in the way of business, with two exceptions only. 1. If it was injurious to the public. 2. To protect those who could not protect

themselves. All the bills introduced by the present Government run counter to this principle, and are contrary to all that I have believed or practised in such matters. I cannot tell you how much I have felt on this change of views on the part of those with whom I have acted so long.'

Some two days later the Duke of Argyll writes in a similar strain.

'I wish I could impress on you my own sense of the great importance of men of moderate opinions in the Commons and men of independent position showing that they will not slip down the inclined plane on which we are all now standing;—to the letting go of all that has hitherto been understood as sound Liberal Principles. Depend upon it the effect on the Cabinet would be great if a good body of independent Liberals were *to set up their backs a little*. You are the only man in a position to give such a party some coherence just now. Gladstone exercises such a sway over the constituencies that the members are afraid to call their souls their own';

and he then proceeds to discuss the subject of 'Free Sale.'

The Land Act once passed it became the desire even of those who had disliked many of its provisions to get it to work successfully. The leaders of the Land League were irreconcilable in their hostility to Mr. Gladstone's Ministry. It was therefore a principal object of Goschen and of moderate Liberals to do all they could to strengthen the hands of the Executive Government. In October Mr. Parnell and other leading Nationalist Members of Parliament were arrested and imprisoned under Mr. Forster's recent Act. The reply of the Land League was the issue of the 'No Rent Manifesto,' which again was followed by the proclamation of the Land League as an 'illegal and criminal Association.' Thus in the parliamentary recess public interest was mainly concentrated on

the struggle in Ireland between the authority of the law and the power of the Land League, and on the attempt which was to be made in the coming Session to prevent Irish obstruction from paralysing the action of the House of Commons.

At this time a friend of Goschen's, the editor of the *Economist*, Mr. R. H. Inglis Palgrave,<sup>1</sup> was meditating on the position of the 'Moderate Liberals.' He writes (November 16, 1881) to Goschen that before taking up the subject he feels one great difficulty.

'Who is to be their leader? That this is your natural position I cannot doubt and I wish to be allowed to express again a hope that it will not be long before you are in office. I do not say this for your own sake so much as for the country and the moderate Liberals in particular. The matter is put before me thus. The question of the County Franchise—which alone is understood to separate Mr. Goschen from the existing Government—can hardly in the nature of things, be taken in hand before the close of the present Parliament—it being understood that a dissolution, as a rule, immediately follows a great change in the franchise. How then will the matter work out for Mr. Goschen?

'Other statesmen will have been to the front for a whole Parliament, and will have been recognised as leaders. The next Parliament, if meeting five years hence, is likely to be without Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington—and with Mr. Forster a man of about seventy. The probable leaders of the Liberals in the Lower House will be then Sir C. Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain. How will Mr. Goschen like to fit in with them?—who will have then the force and prestige which six years' office will have given them. This is on the supposition of a Liberal majority next General Election; but should it be otherwise will Mr. Goschen, not having been in office so long, be able to rally the then opposition round him?'

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir R. H. Inglis Palgrave.

These opinions Mr. Palgrave says he hears discussed on all sides, and 'as for the County Franchise,' he continues:

'I know how repugnant to you would be any step which might even appear to lower the *moral* of statesmanship in this country. But I shall on *all* grounds regret *most heartily* if you remain long out of office. And the extension of the franchise appears to be likely to be no longer a party question, but one conceded on all sides. . . .'

The three letters quoted are but samples of the many that Goschen was at that time receiving, not only from personal friends, but from those who at a distance had admired his character and felt him to be a statesman upon whom in a trying season the country might well lean. Many of the newspapers now fully recognised that in the future his personality would count for much. Goschen was not in any sort of way intriguing against the Government. He was not heading 'a *cave*' whose object it was to overthrow a Minister. He was acting upon the principle that, as we have seen, always actuated him. The Liberal Party was not composed only of extreme Radicals, and of stick-at-nothing political partisans, but contained also a strong infusion of moderate and responsible men. The last thing he desired was to take those men out of the Liberal Party, and to merge them with the Conservatives. But he did want, and he intended, that their views should not be ignored by Liberal statesmanship. In November he spoke at Watford and at Rugby, giving what was practically a public answer to the suggestions and advice of friends and admirers, and fully defining his own position.

In addressing the Liberal Association at Watford, Goschen asked to be allowed to touch but lightly on controversies that had been settled, and to discuss more fully

the programme of the future than the difficulties of the past. He protested against the reckless denunciation of Her Majesty's Government. How could the Conservatives, he asked, expect at such a time as that to govern Ireland?

'I believe there are few men of any shade of politics who are not of opinion that at this moment a continuance of Mr. Gladstone in office is a matter of imperative national necessity. Looking at the whole of the surrounding circumstances, looking at the task in which he is engaged—and a heavier task has seldom fallen to the lot of an English statesman—I say that every man must hope that Her Majesty's Government with its illustrious chief will be allowed to continue that task to which they have devoted themselves with such unflagging energy.'

It was only, he said, by means of the practical unanimity of the English people that the authority of the Executive Government, which had been forced to have recourse to coercive measures in Ireland, could be maintained. It was only with their unanimity that it would be possible for the Government unflinchingly and unwaveringly to carry them out.

'I believe that it is Mr. Gladstone's personal predominance and influence with the Liberal party, and with the most extreme wing of the Liberal party, which has secured and will secure that Liberal unanimity. It is essential in this matter that all classes, and what is called the democracy of England, should be rallied to the Executive Government at the present moment; and Mr. Gladstone's character, his unsurpassed services to the party, his great genius, his burning love of freedom, his known abhorrence of brute force except where coercion is absolutely necessary—all these qualities of Mr. Gladstone are essential in order to carry with the Government the support of the whole of the united people of England and Ireland.'

He did, indeed, suggest that perhaps too much rope had been given in the past to Irish agitators, and that the Government might have acted earlier; but delay had, he believed, at all events, secured for the strong measures that were necessary a unanimity of support which could ill have been dispensed with.

As to parliamentary obstruction, Goschen hoped almost against hope that Conservatives would themselves lend a hand to a bold reform of procedure, though he was afraid it was more likely they would resist it on the ground of the privileges of the House of Commons. 'There was one privilege he claimed for Parliament as a whole, and that was the privilege of being allowed to do the work they were expected to do at Westminster,' and he went on to point out very usefully that time was required in the House of Commons not only to enable it to pass wise measures, but to check foolish ones, by discussing in responsible fashion 'views, effusions, theories, nostrums, remedies and panaceas that were going about the country which healthy parliamentary debate might put an end to, and thus prevent injurious or unwise legislation.' And in this connexion he exposed with telling effect the fallacies of the 'Fair Traders,' with whom, during a period of temporary distress, some of the minor members of the Conservative Party had lately been coquetting.

In a similar strain at Rugby (November 29) Goschen called for the general support of the country to the Executive Government. His respect for law and order had, he said, been partly learnt whilst he was a sixth-form boy. It was part of their tradition to support the discipline of the school, to suppress secret tyranny and anarchy, and to punish outrages with a strong and unflinching hand. But this training was not opposed to Liberalism, and Rugby

had always supplied its fair quota to the Liberal ranks. And then, at Rugby, as elsewhere, he proceeded to enlarge on the danger of over-centralisation, and the advantages to be gained by establishing and reforming local government, which, as we have seen, had been from his entrance into political life one of the ends which he had had most at heart.

‘Grillion’s. First dinner. Curious meeting of Derby and Salisbury, myself and Hicks Beach. Fortescue dodged.’ This is the entry for February 13—the first of the half-dozen little jottings made in the notebook of 1882, which in the following year was to expand into an irregularly kept diary. His relations with the Government were at this time very friendly. He spoke often on behalf of the closure, or the *clôture*, as that novel and foreign experiment for bringing debate to an end was then called. He fully believed that the Government intended to strengthen the criminal law in Ireland, and his having voted with them on a motion for the adjournment of the debate on the County Franchise question, brought forward by Mr. Arthur Arnold, had even made Ministers suppose, quite erroneously however, that he had given up his objection to that measure. The ill-judged action of the House of Lords in appointing a committee to inquire into the working of the Land Act he much regretted. ‘It was considered disastrous,’ he said, ‘even at Brooks’s.’ Nevertheless, whatever his goodwill to Ministers, he certainly did not at all anticipate that in the opinion of Mr. Gladstone himself, as in that of many of his friends, it had become possible or desirable that he should now enter the Cabinet.

‘My dear Goschen,’ wrote the Prime Minister on June 1, 1882, ‘I am now in a condition to submit your name to the Queen for the War Secretaryship of State, if as I hope the

difficulty which kept us apart at a former period is now removed, and if as I also hope that you will consent to my request. I refer of course to the question of the County Suffrage: as to which I have understood, but I cannot say authoritatively, that your vote for the adjournment signified that you thought the time had come, when the principle might properly be admitted.'

The position of the Government on that question, he went on to say, was unchanged. It would be settled by the existing Parliament, he hoped, in the year after next, whilst next year would be devoted to effectual dealing with local government. He and his colleagues hoped 'at this important crisis' that Goschen would once more be 'associated with the Government in the discharge of public business. It was not to be. 'Your letter came upon me as a great surprise,' wrote Goschen to Gladstone on June 2, and his vote had not at all meant that he had changed his opinion. Indeed, he had intended, he said, to speak *against* Mr. Arnold had he not lost his voice through an attack of hoarseness.

'The insurmountable barrier is still there, and nothing remains for me except to thank you for your proposal, the friendly character of which I cordially appreciate, and to ask you to rest assured that whatever my ultimate decision might have been in other circumstances (a point on which, as matters now stand, it is needless for me to be more explicit) I am not insensible to the honour of being again asked to serve under a chief, to my former association with whom I look back with so much satisfaction.'

The comment in the diary runs, 'Gladstone's letter and offer coming at this time is very significant. He evidently ignores any other difference between us.' Long afterwards,

when recalling that period, he noted that 'his opinions on many matters were so different from Gladstone's that he could not with any ease have accepted that post.'

The 'important crisis' mentioned in Mr. Gladstone's letter was due to the resignation first of Lord Cowper, and then of Mr. Forster, the latter caused by the release of Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Kelly under what was called by the Opposition the Kilmainham Treaty. The murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke in the Phoenix Park, on Saturday afternoon, May 6, immediately followed the withdrawal from Dublin of Mr. Forster, at whose life the conspirators had for some time been aiming. The excitement was intense.

But before the assassinations had taken place men's nerves had already become highly strung. Why, it was asked indignantly, had Mr. Forster resigned? The Act under which the three Nationalist members had been imprisoned 'as suspects' was soon to expire, and their release would become necessary. But surely that did not absolve the Government from the duty of obtaining other effectual means of upholding the authority of the law! What the Government meant to do was uncertain; but it was quite clear that Mr. Forster, who had borne the brunt of the battle against both Irish Nationalists in the House of Commons and Irish anarchists and conspirators in Ireland, had refused to accept the new policy, which, to his mind at least, appeared to be a surrender by the Government of their responsibility for the maintenance of law and order to the very men who had been fighting against it. Goschen had spoken in the House of Commons with warmth when Mr. Forster's resignation had been announced; but he carefully abstained from committing himself to anything like censure of the Prime Minister and his

colleagues before the facts were fully known. For these he would wait.

There were other Liberal Members of Parliament less patient perhaps than Goschen, who feared that the Ministry were contemplating an unworthy 'new departure.' The Irish Government, it was suspected, was about to abandon in despair the duty of ruling Ireland. Messrs. Parnell and Dillon would be called to the aid of Ministers of the Crown, and would graciously give their support, but on terms which would involve the sacrifice of the interests of the law-abiding classes of that country. Mr. Forster had represented the law, Mr. Parnell the Land League, and in the struggle between them the latter had won. The Government, it is true, had spoken vaguely of asking for fresh powers from Parliament; but a suspicion was prevalent that there was no real intention of having further recourse to so-called 'coercion.' In the afternoon of Saturday, May 6, a gathering of Liberal members of this way of thinking met at the house of Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, and agreed to protest vigorously on the Monday should the Government show an intention to delay any further their measures for preserving the peace. To postpone them till after the Arrears Bill, or till after the procedure resolutions, would be tantamount to indefinite postponement. The Government should therefore be pressed at every opportunity to show how they proposed to perform their primary duty in Ireland of upholding the law. Goschen, who had had notice of the meeting, was not present. Its proceedings and intentions were at once communicated to Lord Hartington, and the gathering was one of many symptoms of the time of the steadily growing feeling on the Liberal side of the House of Commons that lawlessness had been too long successful in Ireland, and that the Government

henceforth, whatever measures of reform it might produce, would be expected by an important section of its supporters to show more firmness in governing.

A little later in the afternoon of the same day the crime in the Phoenix Park was perpetrated. It became known at a party at the Admiralty that night, and on Sunday the news was all over London. On the Monday afternoon, when the Government was to state the course of business, the House of Commons met only to adjourn. On Thursday a very large number of members of both Houses of Parliament attended the funeral of Lord Frederick Cavendish at Chatsworth, and at 9 P.M. that day the House of Commons met to hear Sir William Harcourt introduce the Prevention of Crimes Bill.

There was no sign of wavering or of weakness now. A terrible crime, but yet not more atrocious than many that had preceded it, had at last brought home to the British public the real state of things. Neither Sir William Harcourt's speech nor his Bill could be criticised by anyone as being weak or ineffective. Messrs. Parnell and Dillon spoke in fitting terms of their detestation of the crime that had been committed. But Nationalist opposition to the Bill and the Government was bitter and violent, and the Speaker had some trouble in keeping the vehement language of members within parliamentary limits. Dillon was obliged to withdraw the epithet of 'bloodthirsty' applied to the oration of the Home Secretary, whilst Goschen had to withdraw the charge against a section of the members of the House that 'they were steeped in treason.' There was no need, for a time at all events, to spur the Government into more vigorous action. The effect of the outrage in Dublin had hardened the political situation, and public opinion would not now tolerate

anything that bore the slightest resemblance of surrender to the party of violence. Three weeks before these events Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice had informed Goschen that there were probably some fifty Liberal Members of Parliament ready even to vote against the Government should no measures be taken to strengthen the law on the expiration of Forster's Protection of Life and Property Act, and perhaps as many more who would find some reason for absenting themselves from a division. Goschen, as we have seen, had been himself inclined to believe that the Government would without urging have recourse to the measures desired, and he was more anxious to ascertain what means of influencing the situation he and moderate Liberals possessed in case an emergency should occur, than at once to take hostile action. But now Goschen and the Moderates stood heartily by the Government. The passage of the Prevention of Crimes Bill through the House of Commons led to scenes of extraordinary violence. The 'morning sitting' on Friday, June 30, beginning at 2 P.M., lasted continuously (excepting the seven to nine adjournment that day) till 8 P.M. on Saturday, when the committee stage of the Bill, with the exception of some new clauses, was completed. But this was not accomplished till twenty-five Irish members had been suspended, and these Irish members had behind them, it must be remembered, not only the enthusiastic approval of their own constituents but the good wishes of the great majority of the Irish people. On one side it was said, 'This is not Parliamentary Government; it is arbitrary rule, clothed in parliamentary forms.' On the other side it was said, with at least equal truth, that the action of the Obstructives was not parliamentary opposition; it was rebellion disguised under parliamentary forms. The House of Commons after all is a meaningless

institution except on the supposition that the majority must prevail.

The Government as a whole stood firm, and was well supported by the House in general and by public opinion; but, nevertheless, as time went on, there were signs, unmistakable by those who were closely watching events, that there were differences of feeling and hesitations amongst Ministers, even in these critical days, which might lead to future trouble. Some of them occasionally showed themselves little grateful to members for praising in the House Ministerial firmness, and urging its continuance! Indeed, it had happened that Ministers, even so conspicuous as Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, had absented themselves from a 'coercion' division for which a Party 'whip' had been sent out. 'Hardly consistent this,' grumbled many old members, 'with accepted principles of joint Ministerial responsibility for Government measures.' Rightly or wrongly, a belief was springing up in the Liberal ranks that a powerful, if not a numerous, section of the Ministry, with its eye on the future, was looking to a political combination between advanced English Radicalism and the Nationalism of Ireland. It was certain that a County Franchise Bill was coming, and that its effect would be to increase very greatly the following of Mr. Parnell. It might be as well, perhaps, for the leaders of a democratic future not to destroy every prospect of friendly alliance with the commander of forces whose numbers in the lobby would soon be so largely increased. It need scarcely be said that fears and suspicions such as these led many whose sentiments were now beginning to be voiced by Goschen to do all they could to strengthen the hands of the moderate Liberal section of the Liberal Party.

During the parliamentary recess of 1882 men's thoughts

were largely taken up with events in Egypt. The successful expedition under Sir Garnet Wolseley, and his victory on September 13, 1882, at Tel-el-Kebir, reflected the highest credit on the general, and bore witness also to good administration in the military and naval departments presided over by Mr. Childers and Lord Northbrook. The popularity of the Government increased, and when Parliament met at the end of October to consider the new rules of procedure the Liberal Party appeared to be in hearty unison. Irish obstruction and the irresponsible factiousness of the 'Fourth Party' had done a good deal to offend general sentiment in and out of the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone's proposals did not go beyond what the necessities of the case required, and Goschen gave them his hearty support.

The rest of the recess was spent with his family at Seacox Heath, where he received many visits from his friends. 'No time for reading' is a constant complaint in his diary. Another that 'he reads so slowly, even ordinary books where there is no special reason that he should read carefully.' 'George and Willie,' his sons, can, he says, both read much faster than he can. At this time he was studying the Egyptian Blue Books, he was preparing a speech for Ripon, he was looking closely into franchise questions. He was getting up a 'Tait Memorial Scholarship' for his old school, he was 'reading Virgil with George,' he was keeping up a large correspondence with friends. He had also his out-of-door occupations: 'Draining woods is now my hobby'—'Billiards with Maude,' and such-like entries show the manner in which the days slipped past. Nevertheless, he was finding time to read the 'Life of Mendelssohn,' which greatly interested him, 'Madame de Récamier's *Memoirs*,' 'Lanfrey's *Napoleon*,' 'Marriages

of the Buonapartes'—‘badly written but very interesting,’—‘Democracy,’ etc.

The Session of 1883 opened (February 15) with the tiresome Bradlaugh trouble. Gladstone was at Cannes, Lord Hartington leading the House. ‘General Irish row,’ says the diary. ‘Came back to hear all the old Irish voices. O’Donnell, O’Connor, etc., speaking one after another. The House seemed oppressed and dull.’ Then the Address. ‘Northcote spoke feebly and Hartington replied without much force either, the House still seeming depressed and dull till Lawson got up and made a lively attack about Egypt,’ giving notice of an amendment regarding the war, and urging evacuation as soon as possible. ‘The war had been a bondholders’ war,’ and the oppression which, according to Sir Charles Dilke had been carried on in the name of Ismail, was now carried on ‘in the name of Goschen.’ To this attack Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice made, as Under Secretary to the Foreign Office, his maiden speech in reply.

‘Next day Arthur Balfour opened the debate, moving a resolution that the House regretted that steps had not been taken earlier which might have prevented the war, etc. He made no case. The House was listless and seemed to think the subject had been threshed out last year. . . . There seemed to be little disposition to back up Lawson below the gangway.’

Later in the debate Dilke replied to the attack on Goschen.

‘Northcote spoke weakly endorsing Balfour and saying he could not vote for Lawson’s amendment as men with different views would be in the same lobby. Hartington replied with one of his happiest speeches, laughing at the

wording of Balfour's amendment about steps which might have avoided the war. What steps? Taken when? He pulled the whole thing to pieces. Lawson then declared he wouldn't vote with Balfour. Through a mistake of Lawson no division was taken on his amendment, of which many Radicals were exceedingly glad. Then a Division came on Balfour, the Home Rulers voting with him. Majority comparatively small: thirty-five I think. Many of our men had not remembered the importance of an early division. Perhaps they wished to avoid voting. I heard Lyulph Stanley had an evening party, and that some of the men there wouldn't take the trouble to go to a division.'

During the debate on the Address the agriculturists had a field-day, and Goschen seized the opportunity to make a short currency speech, in which he argued that the appreciation of gold was the main cause of the fall in prices. The House listened with the deepest attention, and the speech was widely commented upon by the newspapers, and canvassed by political economists and financiers, for many a long day. The next day the 'Fourth Party' raised a debate on Kilmainham, and Goschen was anxious to reply to Sir John Gorst and 'throw dust on the whole business.' Legal proceedings against the alleged assassins of the Phoenix Park were pending, and Goschen made a vigorous protest, much cheered, as to the untimely character of the motion supported by Gorst and Churchill, and its bad effect in weakening the Executive. On February 21 the course of debate again turned towards Ireland and 'coercion.'

'The most notable speeches were those of Plunkett and Jesse Collings. Plunkett spoke beautifully as did Gibson yesterday, but the interesting thing was to hear Collings, who spoke from the most doctrinaire point of view, against

"coercion," etc. and apparently utterly ignoring all the terrible crimes. I was exceedingly glad to hear him as a specimen, and wondered whether he really represents the democracy of which he spoke! . . .

*‘Thursday, February 22.—*A most exciting evening. Forster made his great speech indicting Parnell and the Land League; but he began by what was an answer to Harcourt and a vindication of himself in the controversy with the Cabinet. He had asked whether I thought it necessary to do this, and I had said "No" very emphatically. This attack upon Parnell produced a tremendous effect but his damaging blows on the Government put the Liberals into an attitude of criticism and coldness towards him; and what was more important gave Irish Home Rulers the opportunity of damaging the effect of his speech by constant allusions to his "treachery to his colleagues," etc. Then Parnell afterwards called him an informer: but this attack on Parnell was wonderfully courageous and effective. Thorold Rogers said "nothing had been heard like it, since Cicero's attack on Catiline." The Home Rulers seemed at this time overawed, and at times maddened and O'Kelly was suspended for shouting at Forster, "You lie." T. P. O'Connor, two hours later, made a speech; it was exceedingly good for so short a time for preparation and spoken after such tremendous excitement as Forster's speech had produced. The graveness of Forster's charge was that Parnell and his friends "now connive at murder." Parnell would not speak after Forster, nor would he speak later, but afterwards after Hartington had spoken moved adjournment of the debate. Hartington not as good as usual: rather halting and did not get hold of the House.

*‘Friday, February 23.—*Parnell made his reply: angry, violent, but considered by the House very unsatisfactory. It was not without ability, however. I never remember a more exciting time: or anything more dramatic than Forster's speech yesterday, and Parnell's to-day. Trevelyan replied well but with some weak points from a rhetorical point

of view: playful literary allusions which weakened effect of his attitude. One thing that struck me particularly in his speech was the reproof to doctrinaires and Radicals like Collings and his challenge to them to listen to such statesmanlike speeches as Gibson's and Plunkett's. Would he ever have said this if Gladstone had been present? Gladstone would have jumped out of his skin. I thought he delivered some unnecessary blows at Forster. The debate was wound up by Chamberlain, who made the best speech he has made since he was in the Cabinet—weightier and more statesmanlike than he has spoken before, altogether more in Cabinet style. But he complained very distinctly of the Irish policy which has always been attributed to him; and marking very clearly a difference between Hartington and Trevelyan on the one hand and himself on the other.

*'Saturday, February 24.—Dined with Dilke. Meeting W. H. Smith, Sclater Booth, and some more Government people! Sclater Booth told me Dufferin seemed "very sound" in Egyptian affairs, which meant in favour of staying there, etc. I remonstrated with him as to the attitude taken by the Conservatives on Foreign Policy. It is really most unpatriotic. I talked to Smith too about a notice Northcote has given for a select committee nominated by the Committee of Selection to examine witnesses on oath about the Kilmainham negotiations. Never was there a more democratic proposal.'*

The relations between Mr. Gladstone and the Nationalists were exceedingly strained at this time. The former was sensitive as to attacks upon his Land Act, and when (March 13) Parnell had denounced the Land Courts for having fixed rents which tenants were unable to pay, the wrath of the Prime Minister was great. 'He made a capital speech loudly applauded by the Conservatives. He put his foot down about further legislation, refused

to keep matters open, denounced Parnell, etc.' The Ulster members, of whom in those days some were Liberal, were delighted. On the other hand,

'Bryce made a foolish speech regretting the action of the Government and explaining that they ought to have gone forward with the improvement of the Land Bill. It was significant that the Liberals cheered Gladstone very little, but the Conservatives were in ecstasies.'

This was one of the many occasions in which a cleavage of opinion was making itself perceived amongst Liberals upon Irish questions. Some were urging Gladstone into closer relations with Mr. Parnell and the Nationalists. Others, amongst whom Goschen was the chief, were doing their best to strengthen the Prime Minister's hands, and to insist that the laws Parliament had passed should be effectually carried out. The differences between Liberals existed not only in the ranks of the Party, but within the Ministry itself. On other than Irish subjects, too, at this time the Government was in troubled waters. 'It seemed fearfully worried about the Transvaal, the Cape, the Palmer expedition, etc.' Forster was attacking them heavily for not defending the South African native rulers and people against Transvaal aggression. Goschen had found the Blue Books unpleasant reading; but he kept more in view than did some of 'the philanthropists' the dangers of sending military assistance to 'natives against Europeans.' Forster was showing himself far less willing than Goschen to make allowances for the extreme difficulty and danger of the position, and the former was beginning to be credited in Government circles with having become a bitter political opponent. With Mr. John Morley, who had just entered Parliament, but who had watched it long and closely from the outside,

‘I had an interesting talk the other day about men in the House of Commons. He told me how after three weeks he felt he had never understood the House before. I explained to him how one got on: brains often useless, etc., etc. One of his chief points was that it was most disappointing to see no result of one’s work. I explained how many undelivered speeches crowded the drawers of M.P.’s.’

On Easter Monday Goschen escaped to Paris, where he spent a pleasant week, seeing much of his old friends the Plunketts, breakfasting with M. Joubert at his own house and at Durand’s, dining and having long talks with Lord Lyons, going to the play and seeing, amongst other things, ‘Féodore’—‘magnificent, i.e. Sarah Bernhardt. I never saw her so fine—on the stage nearly the whole time and the whole play turns on her.’ On his return he is again plunged into work of very various kinds—Blue Books to study, University extension business, attendance on the Ecclesiastical Commission—the Budget. Soon afterwards, however, Mrs. Goschen fell ill, and for the next five months there are no more jottings in the journal. He was able, however, to attend the House of Commons, and in May Goschen made a spirited speech in support of the Bill to enable Mr. Bradlaugh to affirm instead of taking the oath of allegiance; but the Conservatives and the Irish going into the lobby together, the Bill was rejected by three votes in a House of nearly 500 members.

Goschen throughout the Session had steadily maintained a position of independent criticism. He had urged, whenever he could, moderate counsels. He had tried to strengthen the Moderates against the pressure of the Liberal left wing; but, on the other hand, he had shown little disposition to put trust in official Conservatism, and

he detested the mischievous tactics and the unpatriotic conduct as regards foreign affairs (for so he considered it) of the Front Opposition Bench below the Gangway.

In Egypt things had been, and were, exceedingly ominous and difficult; but Goschen was much pleased at Major Baring's appointment, from which he augured great results, and was not ill-pleased with the general action of the Government.

'I do not know,' he wrote to Baring (October 23, 1883) from Seacox Heath, 'if I had written to you before whether I ought to congratulate or condole with you on your appointment. . . . No one whom I know has a more ticklish job on hand; but I can fancy that you in a way enjoy it, and are setting to work with all the "go" I so well remember. . . . You will find Vincent an excellent worker. . . . We are all agog to know what is going to take place about evacuation. The Foreign Office people proper seem to be violently opposed to it, and to fear it may lead to ultimate difficulties with France, who would move if we gave them a chance; and afterwards give us trouble if we wished to keep them out again, but all this seems based on the idea that evacuation would mean abandonment which it would not. You must however have all the considerations and counter considerations off by heart; and besides everything I now write may be out of date even by the time you receive this letter. The Government here are exceedingly strong at the present moment, and they can practically do as they like, I think. Faults may be visited on them afterwards, but I don't think that they would have to fear any combined or formidable attack *now*, whatever they did. Of course this increases their responsibility; and I cannot conceive any more fearfully difficult problem than they have to solve. I have not seen any of them very lately, so what I hear has been mainly indirect news. After a little time it will be

*you* who will direct *them*, rather than *they* who will direct *you*; and an agent who *has* a policy decently in accord with the general feeling of the Government has an immense advantage, seeing that the tendency to drift is not one from which our friends are entirely free. They backed me capitally during the most critical time of my Turkish Mission, after we had fairly got under weigh, and began to understand each other.'

Mr. Gladstone had always had a high respect for Goschen's character: he admired his ability, and probably at this time he thought him 'dangerous.' The Prime Minister had in vain, nearly a year and a half before, asked him to enter his Cabinet as Secretary of State. And now that Speaker Brand had privately intimated his wish to retire, Mr. Gladstone indulged a very strong hope that Goschen would consent to be his successor.

(*Secret.*)

'My dear Goschen,' writes Gladstone from Downing Street (November 17, 1883). 'You are aware how serious a question the choice of a successor to Brand has become, and how much the Cabinet are bound to look, not merely for what will or might satisfy, but for the best and strongest man who can and will undertake the charge. In these circumstances, I together with my colleagues have to express a most earnest hope that you will allow us to put you in nomination for the Chair. I am aware of the grave nature of this proposal, but I hope you may accede to it, and I feel sure you will consider it maturely.'

'It is needless to enumerate the qualifications which you possess for this elevated and arduous office, in which *now* not only good but splendid service is to be rendered to the Country and the Crown. I will only at this moment further observe that the posture of political affairs seems to us at some points favourable to my opening this subject; and that

I do not consider that your accepting the Chair at this time need in any way entail a permanent renunciation of your political career. . . .

Goschen, always shortsighted, greatly doubted whether, even with the help of powerful glasses, he would be able satisfactorily to perform the duties of 'The Chair'; but supposing that oculists were able to reassure him on this point he was ready to put himself in Mr. Gladstone's hands, if he and his colleagues were persuaded of his general fitness for that high place. Somehow, not of course through Goschen, rumours of what was happening reached the newspapers, to the great annoyance of Mr. Gladstone, who, on December 6, wrote :

' In the matter of leakage our state is little short of disgraceful, far worse than I ever remember it : but I have not known you all these years without being aware that you were not the man. Neither do I think it is my own *entourage*. At any rate I have had thirteen budgets, all of them known to six or eight people for days and perhaps weeks and not a word of one of them has transpired—except once when the traitor was a Cabinet Minister who heard it the day it came out and gave it to the *Times*—and made no response when I complained in the Cabinet. We are truly sorry to lose you. We have a good man in Arthur Peel. . . .

For, after more than one consultation, Bowman, the eminent eye-doctor, had advised that the risk of failure was great, and this concurring with Goschen's own very considerable doubts on the point, had led him to decline the offer, to the general rejoicing, it must be said, of most of his personal and political friends. ' Are you *really* going to become Speaker? ' writes Lady Hayter. ' I *can't* believe it ! . . . It would be suicide to your political life, though a dignified retreat from

an impossible position with your own party.' A widely experienced and popular member of Brooks's Club with a somewhat caustic tongue expresses doubtless the sentiments he heard all round him :

' MY DEAR GOSCHEN,

' I cannot help saying that situated as we are between the Devil Chamberlain and the Deep Sea Salisbury, so good a man as yourself ought not to be wasted in the Chair. Therefore personally, patriotically, and selfishly I am glad that no "specialist" has been able to give you the means of accepting the honour. . . .'

A not altogether dissimilar feeling is expressed in different language by Lord Reay, writing soon after Goschen's speeches in Edinburgh. ' I do not like to look upon you as a Liberal Cardinal whose mouth is for ever shut by a Liberal Pope! '

In Edinburgh Goschen had, just before Mr. Gladstone's pressing request to him to accept the Speakership, made two speeches which had attracted much attention in and out of Scotland. Under the auspices of the Rosebery Club, composed of Liberal students of the University, he had insisted on his right to speak 'as a Liberal to Liberals.' True he was a 'Moderate Liberal,' but he was not ashamed of it and as such he was as much a member of the Party, for whom he had fought many a battle, as any advanced Radical. He did not grudge them the right of airing their opinions, and he claimed the same liberty for himself.

' Mr. Chamberlain avowed that he was in favour of equal electoral districts, of paying members of parliament, and of universal suffrage. He had the courage of his opinions; but I have the courage of mine, and I totally dissent from them.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Report of Speech in *Times*, November 1, 1883.

Two days later he discoursed at the opening for the season of the Philosophical Institution on '*Laissez-faire* and Government Interference.' Without attempting to formulate any principle to distinguish between cases where Government interference is or is not legitimate and advantageous, he pointed out the causes of the change in public opinion towards constant regulation by the State of relations between men which they formerly used to manage for themselves, and the difficulties, drawbacks, and even dangers which would ensue from pressing too far the notion that 'the State' was all-powerful and all-wise. His own leaning was in favour of compelling the individual to perform his duties himself, and making him responsible for them, rather than that the State should at the general expense take upon itself the actual performance of the duty, as if, for instance, the object were to prevent the providing of insanitary dwellings or unseaworthy ships. This address attracted great attention, and was widely circulated. The Scottish mind was impressed, and a belief speedily grew up that Scotland would yet see a good deal more of Mr. Goschen. All of which may, perhaps, have increased the eager zeal of Mr. Gladstone in pressing upon Goschen his acceptance of the Chair. He even himself saw the eye specialist, Mr. Bowman, whose ultimate opinion was, however, so clear and decided that no more could be said. Fortunately, as he wrote to Goschen on December 6, unwillingly accepting the situation: 'We have a good man in Arthur Peel'—and so the matter ended. The Chair was splendidly filled by Speaker Peel, and Goschen remained in an independent position to play that part in the rapidly approaching difficulties of his country for which his character and abilities pre-eminently fitted him.

'In the year 1884,' wrote Goschen long afterwards,

with his eyes on the past, 'a new chapter opened in my political life.' His own position of independence became more accentuated. The Conservatives at that time gave him no help in resisting democratic reform.

'They pretend not to see that I am practically alone or should be if I did seriously oppose. They never pronounce against the Franchise; they have never had a meeting against it, never spoken except as regards the time of yielding.'

Nearly twenty years before, Mr. Lowe had been with the Conservative Opposition a most popular hero when he was fighting Mr. Gladstone's Reform Bill; but they had left him severely alone when, in the following Session, he held the same language in opposing the far more democratic measure of Disraeli.

In 1884 the Conservative Party had no intention of burning its boats in a struggle against lowering the franchise. Both Parties must in truth recognise the facts of the time. Nowadays we live under a democracy, and no political Party can afford to be directly anti-democratic. The Tory Lord Randolph Churchill was prepared to run the Radical Mr. Chamberlain very hard in the matter of promises to catch the extreme 'democracy.'

Parliament met the day after the news reached London of the defeat of the Egyptian troops under Baker Pasha with a loss of 2000 men. And the Session of 1884 was to open with a vote of censure on the Government policy as regards Egypt, moved by Sir Stafford Northcote. Goschen had, of course, followed that policy with the closest attention, had studied the Blue Books, and kept more or less in touch with the men on the spot. There had, no doubt, been much that, looking back on events, he might find it easy to

criticise. In complicated and difficult circumstances—and no one appreciated these difficulties more than Goschen himself—it is always easy to criticise the action pursued. When things go wrong an Opposition will, of course, always say that they must have gone right but for the muddling of His Majesty's Government. Goschen was, however, more anxious about the present and the future than desirous to record a vote of condemnation or acquittal for the conduct of Ministers in the past. He was a practical man, and as such could not treat a vote of censure moved by the Leader of the Opposition as an abstract resolution. The question for him, and for the House of Commons, as he urged in debate, was whether the action of the Government was so black in its Egypt policy as to make it right and wise to turn them out 'in order to replace them by men whom we expect to do better.' He had been much disgusted by the behaviour in the House of Commons as regards foreign policy even of members of position who should have known better, and he made a vigorous protest against the questioning and cross-examining of Ministers, in which the members of the 'Fourth Party' had shown themselves adepts, in absolute disregard of the public interest. To support a vote of want of confidence in Ministers is often almost tantamount to a vote of confidence in their opponents, a confidence which assuredly Goschen did not feel. Thus his position was not an easy one.

'I am asked,' he said, 'to have the courage of my opinions and vote to-night against Her Majesty's Government because I do not agree with them on some points. I have the courage of my opinions; but I have not the temerity to give a political blank cheque to Lord Salisbury. For the first time for many years—for generations—there is a

Government which has declared a policy which is disinterested, and Europe believes it. . . .'

It would be a calamity, he said, now to replace that Government by another. Europe was blaming Her Majesty's Government not because they were doing too much, but because they were doing too little.

'Better a thousand times that it should be so than that three or four European Powers should be intriguing against us, because we want to set up a Protectorate in Egypt. I care as much as any man that this country should maintain its reputation for courage, strength, resolution, and power; but I care no less that we should maintain our reputation for good faith and abiding by pledges, and that neither the hope of profit, nor the fear of difficulties and dangers should persuade us to abandon these pledges. By these pledges Her Majesty's Government will stand, and I shall stand by Her Majesty's Government.'

The speech was made on the last day of the debate. On Goschen's return to the House after dinner, he had been amazed to find that, to quote the diary,

'the Speaker intended to call Chaplin first and then me. This was vexatious as it threw me as late as 10.35; and Gibson, Hartington, and Northcote were to speak after me. I felt I must speak with my eye on the clock. I was cheered on rising and began well with a party hit at Chaplin; I never had a greater *Parliamentary* success than this speech. On the whole I never got the House more in hand. The great hit was my phrase that "I wouldn't give Salisbury a political blank cheque." This was afterwards taken up by every newspaper and everybody congratulated me on it. I consider it was a triumph to get over a very difficult speech in which I had to criticise the Government very severely and yet to uphold them. Even the Radicals appear to have been thoroughly satisfied.'

I dealt very thoroughly with O'Connor. It was impossible to interpolate much financial explanation at eleven o'clock at night. Everybody was exceedingly warm about my speech. It however justified a theory I have often propounded that the same speech is very seldom an equal success in the House and in the Press. The Press did not take it up very warmly; as to the Conservative and Irish provincial Press, I read what they said afterwards and never saw such lies as to the manner in which my speech was received. Home at two. I had spoken for a little more than an hour. Majority for Government forty-seven.'

Now at last the time approached when that great subject of Parliamentary Reform, which Goschen and his old friends of the Liberal Party regarded with such different eyes, was to be effectually dealt with. It was impossible to justify the continuance unchanged of the existing system. The distinctions between town and country had become arbitrary and unreal. Areas entirely urban in character were treated for purposes of parliamentary representation as if they were rural districts. There were other flagrant anomalies not less opposed to the general sentiment of the day than the total exclusion from the franchise of the rural labourer. Still, when the vast addition to the electorate, to be effected by Mr. Gladstone's Bill for assimilating the country and the borough franchise, came to be known, the fear that the new voters and the working class as a whole would actually *monopolise* parliamentary power was widespread, and began to influence the more conservative section of Mr. Gladstone's followers. Goschen spoke<sup>1</sup> on the second day of the debate on the first reading of the Government Bill, and began by

<sup>1</sup> March 3, 1884.

a striking admission that his feelings of distrust of the working classes as regards questions of an economical character had become greatly modified. In the past he had partly founded his argument against admitting them to the franchise on that ground.

‘Now I will candidly admit,’ he went on to say, ‘that events have occurred since that time which have made a deep impression on my mind. Not many years ago there was a serious depression in trade, employment was reduced, wages were lowered, and there were not wanting men who were prepared to dangle as a bait before the working classes the revival of obsolete and exploded doctrines, which might have a plausible appearance, but were none the less thoroughly unsound. But the working man wanting work stood more bravely to his guns than the politician wanting power, and I must say the attitude which the working classes then took must inspire us with some confidence in the attitude they will take in the future. The sturdy language of their representatives at the Trades Union Congress too was in strong contrast with that of some politicians. Whilst the former denounced those doctrines as obsolete and dangerous, there were not wanting politicians—even politicians in conspicuous positions—who were prepared to do the bidding of the working classes if they desired it, and to revive doctrines for which they had no harsher word than “pious opinions.”’

He had been, moreover, much struck by the general sobriety and moderation of language at these assemblies of the working classes where they were left free from outside pressure. Goschen had, he said, carefully watched the last General Election, and had seen that the artizans did not act solely on class grounds, but fully shared the interest of other classes in the general affairs of the nation. ‘They had taken a genuine political interest in public questions,

and indeed a more genuine political interest than the class immediately above them.' But admitting all this, the consequences that surely must have been expected to follow the democratic Reform Act of Mr. Disraeli had ensued. There was now, he said, hardly any power of resistance left in Parliament to any popular demand. Even the 'Conservative working man' coerced the Conservative Party in a democratic direction. By the Reform Act of 1867 'the whole centre of gravity of the Constitution had been displaced.' And he went on to show by figures that the total effect of the new Bill and the Act of 1867 taken together would be to make an addition of new voters exceeding in number the whole previous electorate. While he admitted the capacity of a great proportion of the new men, he felt that, in giving power to such vast numbers of a new class, power was being almost completely taken away from other classes. He would not, he said, oppose the extension of the franchise, but he hoped that some arrangements would be made by which these out-numbered classes should still find representation, and that some care would be taken of minorities. It was clear that very often (in Ireland, for example) local differences of opinion would not correct each other. It surely was not intended to disfranchise the loyal classes in Ireland, nor to disfranchise English boroughs, in order to maintain an undue representation of Ireland. He did not wish a Redistribution Bill to be tacked on to the Franchise Bill, but he desired to know the principles to which on this subject the Government would have regard, and he regretted that Mr. Gladstone's speech had shown no appreciation of the importance of taking precautionary measures against the difficulties and dangers to which a *mere* equalisation of the franchise throughout the United Kingdom would give rise.

In April, on the second reading of the Bill, he felt it to be his duty to vote against it, since the Ministry had given no sort of assurance that any steps would be taken to prevent the entire swamping by the newly enfranchised of whole classes of persons who ought to be represented in Parliament, and he entirely admitted that his way of looking at these questions differed *in toto* from that of advanced democrats, who placed absolute confidence in the wisdom of mere numbers. This party was fitly represented by Mr. Chamberlain, who

'seems to wish us to forget that he is a member of the Cabinet, because he wishes us to remember that he is at the same time the vigorous, determined, and unflinching Leader of the advanced section of the Liberal Party in and out of the House.'

If whilst he was a Minister under Mr. Gladstone he held extreme language, what would he say were his Party in opposition! In Goschen's wish to see minorities protected he was not looking towards cumulative voting, which he had never favoured, but rather to proper measures of redistribution.

'What is the good,' he said his friends were always asking him, 'of your individual vote and speech against the Bill? I believe there is no greater temptation, no more seductive influence, to which we in these days ought ever to close our ears than to the siren voice which says—“Swim with the stream; let the boat glide; statecraft is no more than the clever use of the pole to keep it from the bank.” That is not my view. . . . My party seem to breathe an atmosphere of Utopia, and to feel a confidence I cannot share. . . .'

And he ends with a fervent hope that the British democracy of the future will in truth realise the high

expectations of those who believe in it, thereby standing out in splendid contrast to every other democracy that the world had known.

*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre!* This, doubtless, was the view alike of Tory and Radical democrat, of election agent and Party wirepuller, of Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Chamberlain, of the managers of the Primrose League and the Birmingham Caucus! Goschen's objection to the Bill was fundamental. He disapproved the extension of the franchise to two millions of men. In the graceful language of a later day he would have been called 'a whole hog' opponent of the Reform Bill. But when the third reading was reached (June 26, 1884) he had sadly to admit that he stood alone—that no political forces were on his side; no! not even the leader of the Conservative Opposition. Therefore he felt that, whatever might be the fate of that particular Bill, the real question was settled, and he would not, he said, again speak against its principle, though he would use his best efforts to secure a fair and equitable distribution of political powers between all the component parts of the country, and between the electors old and new.

When the Reform Bill reached the House of Lords the Peers refused to proceed with it, unless the whole scheme—redistribution as well as franchise, was before the country. There were some Liberals who agreed with the action of the Peers. Mr. Albert Grey,<sup>1</sup> and some other friends of whom Goschen saw much, had always urged him to fight the Government on those lines. The demand in itself was on the face of it reasonable; but the Government were not less right in urging that to make the whole scheme of reform dependent upon the passing of a Redistribution Bill was to put their entire policy at the mercy of ultra-Tories

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards the fourth Earl Grey.

and obstructionists. Had the Conservatives in the House of Commons been led by a Sir Robert Peel, nay, had Sir Stafford Northcote had the loyal backing of his Party, the criticism of the Opposition would have been of a serious and responsible kind. But taking the facts as they were, what would have been the chance of passing such a measure of detail as a Redistribution Bill in the face of Lord Randolph Churchill and his merry men in close alliance with Mr. Parnell and his Nationalist following—trained experts, as they were, in all the arts of parliamentary obstruction? When the Lords insisted upon their view, the Government had no practical alternative but to let the Bill drop, call Parliament together for an Autumn Session, and reintroduce their Bill.

The natural consequence followed. The agitation for reform became in great measure an agitation against the House of Lords. In September and October demonstrations took place all over the country at which some strong language was used; but which, nevertheless, were on the whole conducted with extreme good temper, owing doubtless to the general belief that Mr. Gladstone and the House of Commons would, before many weeks or months were over, get their way. Mr. Gladstone's own language was restrained and dignified; but as a matter of course some of his colleagues and followers played into the hands of their opponents by the violence of their denunciations, and Liberals of the more timid sort began to quail. On November 6, in a new Session, Gladstone moved the second reading of the Franchise Bill, speaking in the most conciliatory tone, but at the same time firmly declining either to combine it with a Redistribution Bill, or to proceed with the two Bills simultaneously. The first amendment to the second reading, placed on the paper by Lord Randolph Churchill,

was moved by Mr. Edward Stanhope and was on the old lines. Rumours of compromise and of negotiation were in the air, and it is now known that the Queen had been making great efforts to bring the leaders of the two Parties in both Houses into communication with each other.<sup>1</sup> The circumstances were in themselves such as make an arrangement quite possible; but the difficulty, as generally happens at such critical times, was due rather to the warm feelings and Party prejudices of the political combatants and their distrust of each other, than to the intrinsic complexity of the problem itself. Even when leading statesmen are themselves inclined to wise and prudent courses, it sometimes happens that they are swept away by the excited clamour of the irresponsibles behind them, and that an accommodation which would please the moderate men of both Parties and the general sense of the country is rendered in appearance impossible. Then is the time when strong leadership is most wanted. The temper of the House of Commons in the autumn of 1884 varied from day to day with the changing prospects of Party warfare. A great Conservative victory at a by-election in South Warwickshire tended most unfortunately to harden the Opposition in the policy of absolute resistance and no compromise. Goschen, in the hope of getting a reasonable Redistribution Bill passed by the existing Parliament, now spoke strongly in favour of the second reading of the Franchise Bill, and against the Churchill-Stanhope amendment. He had no confidence that if the Conservatives had the framing of a Redistribution Bill it would be more to his taste than one framed on the principles Mr. Gladstone himself had sketched. Indeed, he was afraid that Lord Randolph Churchill and the Tory democrats would endeavour to outbid their opponents in the democratic direction and would dangle before the masses the principle

<sup>1</sup> Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone*.

of equal electoral districts. The second reading was carried by an immense majority, a division tending to strengthen the hopes of a favourable issue. The South Warwickshire Conservative victory told in the opposite direction, and on the third reading of the Bill Goschen referred to the unfortunate change of temper that this had produced, appealing strongly to the Opposition to return to their better frame of mind, and to their leaders to indicate generally, as Gladstone had done, the principles upon which they wanted redistribution to proceed. The third reading was passed without a division, and the fate of the measure, and of more than the measure, now depended upon the action which would be taken in the House of Lords.

In this crisis the spirit of conciliation and English common sense won the day. Lord Salisbury, Sir Stafford Northcote and Sir Michael Hicks Beach conferred with Mr. Gladstone, Lord Hartington, and Sir Charles Dilke, and it was found that there were in fact no irreconcilable differences of principle as regards redistribution between the Conservative and the Liberal leaders. In these circumstances the House of Lords passed the Franchise Bill, the Government undertaking to do its best to pass a Redistribution Bill, the heads of which had been approved by the responsible chiefs of the Opposition. Thus, instead of a desperate struggle about the fundamentals of the Constitution, there was peace between Liberals and Conservatives, between the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The relief to the country, outside the professionally militant section of politicians, was great—so great that, perhaps, it hardly recognised the strangeness of the means employed to make an end of a wrangling of which it was very weary.

The scheme of redistribution necessarily touched the interest of almost every constituency, and therefore of almost every Member of Parliament. It specially concerned the

House of Commons. It had, of course, no direct relation to the House of Lords. It appeared to be a measure which should have been put forward on the responsibility of the Liberal Cabinet. But here was Lord Salisbury, whom throughout the autumn Liberals had spent most of their time in denouncing—the Leader of the Opposition—taking a part, as if he himself were a member of the Cabinet, in framing the new measure! It is not too much to say that the Redistribution Bill that resulted from the deliberations in private of this singular conclave became law without having ever been subjected to real public and parliamentary discussion at all. When the opposite Front Benches of the House of Commons are agreed, there is an end to effective parliamentary debate. Under 'the compact,' as it was called at the time, it was necessary to pass into law as quickly as possible the cut-and-dried scheme that had been produced as a result of the entirely private discussion between Party leaders. Individual members here and there complained that they had lost their rights, and that matters such as single-member districts, minority representation, grouping of boroughs, and other questions of great importance merited parliamentary and public discussion. But it was in vain. Mr. Courtney preferred to resign rather than to support a measure which in his opinion increased still further the injustice to which minorities were subjected. Goschen, though thankful that a constitutional struggle was avoided, regretted that the redistribution was not to effect a truer representation of the people. At last, however, the controversy on that great reform question which had for so many years occupied his thoughts and so deeply affected his career was finally closed. Throughout it he had been unable to see eye to eye with either of the great political Parties, and he had manfully taken his own individual line. In so doing

he had lost ground with Liberals, and yet the behaviour of the Conservatives had not been such as to enlist his confidence. How would it all end?

In the opening of the year 1885 Goschen to all appearances stood singularly alone. Men bent solely or mainly upon playing the Party game knew not what to make of him. Nevertheless, though it is sometimes forgotten, there is a public opinion both as regards measures and men quite distinct from that manifested by Party caucuses and Party newspapers. Goschen's capacity, his courage, his character were recognised, and the public became conscious that should difficulties and dangers come upon the country, they had amongst them a statesman whom they could trust.

In February of the year 1884 Mr. Alfred Milner, at that time mainly occupied in journalism on the staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette* under Mr. Stead, had begun to do secretarial work for Goschen. It was not long before the latter recognised the great abilities of his private secretary, and came to look upon him almost as a colleague and adviser in the political work which he had on hand. Together they studied the Blue Books, talked over every part of the political situation, and, in regard to the best use that could be made of Goschen's energies and influence, spent much time in discussing the when, the where, and the how. In 1885 it became necessary to think out their plan of campaign, and on New Year's Day Milner arrived at Seacox Heath.

'Politics,' says the journal (January 4, 1885), 'are in a very critical position. The Powers seem to be absolutely disinclined to accept the proposals of England as regards Egypt. The Germans are giving fearful trouble in Colonial matters, New Guinea, etc., and things seem closing in on us rather dangerously. Milner and Lucy [Mrs. Goschen] are pitching into me tremendously to make a speech on foreign

and colonial affairs and I shall probably do so. (Wolseley's expedition seems to be going on well.) *Sunday*.—Read the South African papers with Milner. Awful! *Monday*.—Continued discussion with Milner about Europe, Egypt, Africa, and the necessity of making a speech. We talked from ten to one-thirty and discussed where I should speak.'

It almost seemed to Goschen that the Liberal Party was about to break up. Cabinets met almost daily. Gladstone was reported to be unwell.

' Much political excitement here between 4th and 6th. Milner had frantic letters from Stead. The latter has been writing very finely in the *Pall Mall* on the situation. (*Sat*.)—Rumours that Channel Fleet was ordered to sea, but this turned out a hoax, as was suspected.'

At this time came many rumours and letters from Edinburgh. Under the Reform Act Ripon was to lose its separate representation, and it was suggested that Goschen should become a candidate for one of the divisions of the Scottish capital at the General Election in the coming autumn. He would not, however, tie himself to any Party or any leader; but if he stood at all, he was determined to come forward 'on his own record.' He had just withdrawn his subscriptions from the Reform and the Devonshire Clubs, a proceeding which had naturally made much stir.

' The immediate motive,' says the *Journal*, ' was economy. I belong to too many Clubs; but if I analyse my motives, I fancy there is a feeling too of not caring to be *tied* to the party or at least to wear its livery. I am in a devil-may-care humour as to what people may say or think as regards my political future. Chamberlain made a speech on Monday the 5th. Quite detestable. . . . Setting class against class; all against property, which he implies but does not actually say is *landed property*.'

A few days later Mr. Chamberlain made another speech, at Ipswich, which incurred Goschen's disapproval as much as the previous one at Birmingham. Later in the month Goschen paid a visit to Ripon upon his way to Edinburgh, where he was the guest of Lord Young. 'Never was with more hospitable people than the Youngs. Late breakfasts always. He *exceedingly* amusing.' In Edinburgh he saw the principal people, Lord Rosebery, Lord Stair, Lord Reay, Mr. A. L. Bruce, Mr. Buchanan, M.P., and many others, and found the idea of his candidature everywhere well received. He had taken immense pains with the two speeches he delivered on January 31 and February 1, especially with the first, about which he had been very nervous. The last dealt exclusively with foreign affairs. These speeches made a great sensation, and letters of congratulation poured in upon him from all sides. He had lighted on a fortunate moment, and was the first to answer Mr. Chamberlain. He felt he had been wise in yielding to the pressure of his home circle. 'The coalition of Mother [Mrs. Goschen], Maude, and Milner —the three M's—has triumphed,' and so back to Seacox Heath.

Whilst he was in the north public attention had been riveted on the fortunes of the expedition sent to the relief of Gordon at Khartoum. Two critical battles had been fought and won, and when Goschen was speaking in Edinburgh it was known that the British column had established itself on the Nile above Metammeh, and that Sir Charles Wilson had been sent up in Gordon's steamers to Khartoum. The public mind was deeply anxious but full of hope, when, on February 5, arrived the news of the fall of Khartoum. Goschen was on his way from Seacox to attend the Ecclesiastical Commission when the news became known,

and with it the rumour also of Gordon's death. 'Too late, tremendous sensation! What will happen to the Government? Will the country be furious at last? I don't feel much confidence.'<sup>1</sup> On the 11th Goschen spoke at Liverpool and on the 17th went to London for the opening of what was to prove a singularly eventful Session. It began with a vote of censure, moved by the Leader of the Opposition, on the policy of the Government as regards Egypt and the Soudan. This had been the cause, the motion declared, of much sacrifice of life and of vast expenditure without having achieved any good results, and it was necessary in the interests both of Great Britain and Egypt that the Ministry should fulfil the special responsibility now incumbent upon it of providing good and stable government in Egypt and the Soudan. Goschen voted with the Opposition, after declaring that he could find no definite policy in the declarations of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues. The latter had to meet a double criticism, that of those who wished to take possession of Egypt and the Soudan, and that of those who wished to evacuate with all possible speed—the latter led by Mr. John Morley and Mr. Courtney, who, whilst disapproving the Conservative censure, supported an amendment of their own. Goschen and Forster were followed into the lobby by a few Liberals, others abstained, whilst Mr. Parnell and the whole Nationalist vote was thrown on to the side of Sir Stafford Northcote. Thus, after several days' debate, the division showed a majority of only fourteen for the Government.

As the summer approached a sense of failure began to depress the country in general, especially the friends of the Government. Goschen spent a few days of rest at the end

<sup>1</sup> Diary.

of May at Dover, 'reading lots of novels' and thinking that sort of life better for the nerves than travelling about.

'Chief political question,' says the diary, 'is the alleged crisis as to Ireland. Dilke and Chamberlain wanting to go out on Crimes Bill. Everything in a desperate mess—Suakin, Bosphorus, Egypt. I saw Grey about a week ago and had a long talk with him: a fighting vein—suggesting retiring from Edinburgh and endeavouring to bring a party together before the election, so that people might stand knowing where they were; programme: Honesty: Secondary Education: Local Government: Representation and Taxation: Distribution of burdens between the whole Community: Sympathy with Colonies: Administrative Reform; Sympathy with fighting Services: Concentration but Firmness. Grey thought my hypothetical programme extremely good. He had feared we could not say what we would do, only what we would resist. I have thought the matter out too in the form of an Address when the time comes, apart from the question of breaking ties now, but I am extremely disgusted and do not see how I can go on. If the Irish Crimes Bill is renewed only for a year, I shall oppose that provision *coûte que coûte*. But the Conservatives may prove most unreliable. They have been behaving abominably about the budget. Instead of backing the Government in spreading a portion of the burden over the working classes they have raised the cry of injustice in not taxing wine whilst taxing beer. Childers did the budget fairly well—better than I have heard him do anything, I think; but he treated his deficiency of £15,000,000 with singular light-heartedness and so did the House. Childers has beaten his colleagues in insisting on some taxes being put on the working classes, but the Cabinet would not do it straightforwardly—they must get the assistance of tee-totallers, so they put it only on spirits! Vice and Virtue and Hypocrisy.'

For the previous six weeks Goschen had been little in

the House, which had been mainly engaged in finishing the Redistribution Bill and passing the necessary Registration Bill. He was in full sympathy with neither Party. He felt keenly that the Administration was mismanaging the affairs of the country, and that the control of the Liberal Party was falling more and more into the hands of men whose aims were not his aims, and whose methods he positively disliked. He found no comfort when he contemplated the Conservative Opposition. In March he had addressed the Eighty Club at a dinner attended by many of the younger Liberals, presided over by Mr. Albert Grey, the founder of the club, in the chair, on the changes that had come and were coming over British politics.

‘The Conservatives under Disraeli had rejoiced in having annexed the Conservative working man and having captured some large boroughs ; but was it not rather that the working man had annexed the Conservatives and that the new Conservative forces in the boroughs had established a supremacy over the Tory counties.’

Whilst this was happening there had been a loosening of belief on all sides in political principles and economic doctrine, and just as the breakdown of religious belief had often been followed by the appearance of fanatics and false prophets, so, he argued, ‘the dethronement of orthodox political economy seemed likely to be signalled by the appearance of a swarm of quacks. They should beware of a Salvation Army in politics.’

‘I have been more out of spirits,’ Goschen wrote in his journal at Dover, ‘more disheartened and disgusted than ever before : to such an extent that I have thought of going off to the Colonies—Australia for instance, for six months, till the Election is past. Sometimes I have been extremely low and heartbroken. I have not spoken on the

Afghan business, I had not seen the papers. I could not tell what difficulties the Government might have which *we* did not know, but all the same it has been heartbreaking. The Government are furious with Sir Peter Lumsden. They recall him, while Romanoff gets a sword of honour! It is just a case of Gordon! Why can't they choose their instruments! It maddens me to read the apologies that are made. They are almost worse than their faults. Meanwhile Wolseley is furious of course: he is thoroughly thrown over! The Radicals, i.e. J. Morley, have triumphed as regards Egypt and the Soudan in every way. It has been very pathetic to see Gladstone latterly. Will he go? He used language directly conveying that he would; but people doubt it very much. I say we ought to know before the election whether he is to be Prime Minister after the election. Are we to be ranged under his banner? If not, under whose?

He had paid a pleasant visit to Manchester to address a gathering of Working Men's Clubs under the auspices of Owens College, and had been hospitably entertained by Professor and Mrs. Munro.

'Milner will leave me now,' he wrote on returning home. 'He is standing for a division of Middlesex, and, what with the *Pall Mall*, his electioneering work, and Society, he would not give the necessary time. He has been a capital secretary in most respects.'

And for nearly a year and a half Goschen made no further entries in the diary.

There had been ample cause for Goschen's anxieties in the spring of 1885. The advance of the Russian armies on the borders of Afghanistan had excited much apprehension, and talk not always of a very wise kind was common. 'Russian affair looks more hopeful, if that is the right word,' records the diary, April 16, 1885. 'Many people

think it would be best to fight *now*. There is much in that.' The fight at Penjeh brought Great Britain and Russia to the verge of war. The country rang with the sounds of naval and military preparation. Mr. Gladstone asked for a vote of credit of £11,000,000, partly to provide means to carry on the war in the Soudan, and partly with a view to eventualities in respect of Russia. Goschen unfortunately missed Gladstone's splendid speech on that occasion. The Reserves were called out. But happily, before a fortnight had elapsed, Gladstone was able to announce that the two nations had found it possible to refer their disputes to arbitration.

At the end of May Goschen was again in London, and on June 8 the Gladstone Ministry which had survived so much fell before Sir Michael Hicks Beach's resolution condemning Mr. Childers's Budget for imposing increased duties on beer and spirits, whilst not increasing them on wines, and for increasing the death duties on real property. Goschen went into the lobby in support of Ministers, but there were many Liberal absentees, and the Government was defeated by twelve votes. A scene of the wildest excitement followed upon the declaration of the numbers. Lord Randolph Churchill sprang on to his bench cheering wildly and waving his hat above his head, whilst from the packed crowd of Parnellite members behind him came shouts again and again repeated of 'buckshot' and 'coercion,' indicating that, in Nationalist eyes, the victory was a triumph of Home Rulers over a Government which had once contained the hated Forster and had ventured, in support of law and order, to have recourse to 'coercion.' To many Liberal members the result of the division was a surprise. Some had left for dinner without having been warned of the extreme importance of their return for the

division, others had even had reason to suppose that their absence would be no subject for regret to eminent members of the Cabinet. Amongst Liberals the feeling was very general that in the interests of their Party a defeat at that moment was to be preferred to victory. The Ministry was face to face once more with the old question of 'coercion.' Had they continued in office it would have been (in all probability) only to break up over a new Crimes Act, and it was freely suspected, though officially and vigorously denied, that the Government had 'ridden for a fall.' In tactics as well as in policy it may well be that the Cabinet was not of one mind; but there is every reason to believe that, at least to its chief, the defeat in the early morning of June 9 came as an absolute and startling surprise.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE EVE OF GLADSTONIAN HOME RULE

THE fall of the Gladstone Cabinet naturally afforded to the statesmen who had been members of it fuller opportunity of showing their individual political tendencies, from which the public might be expected to judge of the future course of the Liberal Party. Only by the desperate expedient of courting defeat had Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues been able to present, in the summer of 1885, a united front to their opponents. A fortnight before the fatal, or fortunate, division of June 8, Goschen had written<sup>1</sup> to Lord Hartington in very serious vein of the difficulties which would be created for the coming Parliament by any weakness of the Ministry in dealing with Irish lawlessness.

‘MY DEAR HARTINGTON,

‘I read with dismay in the papers about an alleged compromise between two sections of the Cabinet, ending in an agreement that whatever remnant of the Crimes Bill is introduced is to be enacted for one year! I don’t wish to ask you whether this is true; because probably you would not be at liberty to tell me. I only wish to express my most earnest hope that it isn’t. Are we to start with a furious fight over the Crimes Bill in the new Parliament? Is that to be the *pièce de résistance* of the first Session? It would be risking the character of the new Parliament

<sup>1</sup> May 25, 1885.

before it has settled down and demoralising it from the beginning. It would be most unfair to England and Scotland; but it might be worse than unfair; it might be disastrous to our parliamentary institutions. And this burning controversy is to be on us when possibly Gladstone has retired, and when parties may be in a state of chaos. Pray do what you can to save us from what I can regard as little short of a calamity. If the new Parliament are determined to tackle an Irish question in their first Session; at least let it be done by an effort to repeal the Act rather than by one to carry one. If there is a majority in the next Parliament in favour of repealing the Act, they can easily do it; but if there is a majority the other way, they may be impotent to carry a prolongation in the face of such a minority as may be determined to resist it at all hazards and by all means. I can imagine the great difficulties by which you are confronted, but is it right to try and solve them by a process which would bring them on in a redoubled form next year, in what may be the essential Session, the Session most likely to determine the course of English politics for a long period to come? . . .

Now the Liberals were in opposition and each man could speak for himself. Still, as all Liberals were hoping to be restored to power in a few months' time by the vote of an electorate exceeding by two millions of men those previously enfranchised, Goschen became more anxious than ever that the expected Liberal victory should be won in the cause of moderate progress, and not as the result of reckless pledges which it would be ruinous to the country to redeem. He recognised Mr. Gladstone as the Liberal leader. He himself had not broken with the Liberal Party; but he was the most eminent of a considerable number of Liberals in Parliament and the country who viewed with profound distrust the Radicalism of Mr. Chamberlain and

Sir Charles Dilke, and with detestation the policy of national disruption advocated by Mr. Parnell, which up to that time had been denounced by no one more vehemently than by Mr. Gladstone himself. It was at least desirable that the country should understand where it stood, and what its leading statesmen were driving at. 'Home Rule,' 'National Councils,' 'Local Government,' were all in men's mouths. What was the specific policy in favour of which all Liberals were to unite? In these circumstances the following interchange of letters took place between Goschen and the ex-Prime Minister:

'69, Portland Place,  
'Friday afternoon,  
'July 10, 1885.

'MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

'As before very long most of us will be in the thick of the approaching electoral campaign, and indeed as candidates are already pledging themselves in various directions to constituencies, I venture to address you on a subject of deep importance, with regard to which, in my humble judgment, it is extremely necessary, in the interest not only of the Liberal Party, but still more in that of the country, to avoid misunderstandings.

'I allude to the policy with regard to the establishment of several *central* national councils for the different parts of the United Kingdom, which has been distinctly foreshadowed by Mr. Chamberlain, and hinted at by others of your late colleagues.

'I do not find that this policy, reaching deep down to the foundations of the Constitution, has been repudiated in public by any member of the late Cabinet.

'I do not think that such a question ought to be allowed to drift. There ought surely to be no uncertainty as to what the attitude of the leaders of our Party generally would be towards it. Pray do not misunderstand me. When I speak thus, I am not thinking of the reform of Local Government in the usual acceptation of the phrase, nor of

decentralisation and the devolution of important functions to provincial or other local bodies. With all this I heartily sympathise. I am thinking of central national Councils, established on the very ground of the existence of national differences in the United Kingdom.

'That I am justified in calling your attention to the question, I think you will fully allow. The declarations of Mr. Chamberlain at the dinner of the Cobden Club spoke for themselves. But the allusion of Lord Rosebery in Edinburgh to the Crofters' Bill in illustration of the advantages of devolution was also significant and indirectly raised the question: Are proposals to be made that Bills of such a nature as this are to be treated by separate national Councils instead of by the three estates of the Realm?

'I have noticed that almost every Liberal speaker is now urging, in the most earnest tones, the union of all sections of the party. You yourself have written to the Midlothian Liberal Association that the first of your present duties to the party is to use your strongest and most sedulous efforts to prevent anything that could mar the unity and efficiency of that great instrument.

'But surely a policy such as that which has been foreshadowed would be certain to destroy that unity; nor do I think that silence, or uncertainty, with regard to it will further that united action which is so much desired.

'Is unity to be preserved by leaving the programme of Mr. Chamberlain unchallenged before the country? or by an abstention on all sides from the discussion of so difficult and delicate a topic? or rather by an endeavour to come to a clear understanding as to the acceptance or rejection of the main principles involved?

'I venture respectfully to think that the first of these courses cannot and ought not to be followed. The second is rendered impossible by what has already happened. And besides, the constituencies are entitled to know in good time what the authoritative programme of the party is to be. Let me, then, most earnestly urge upon you that the time has come when it is necessary to let the party and

the country know whether or not the establishment of central national Councils for Scotland, Ireland, and Wales is, so far as you can control the matter yourself, one of the questions on which the Liberal party is summoned to be united. I sincerely trust you are in a position to say that it is not.

‘Trusting you will excuse my importunity in asking you kindly to answer this letter at your convenience, as my anxiety on the subject is very great,

‘I remain,

‘Yours very sincerely,

‘(Signed) GEORGE J. GOSCHEN.’

To which Mr. Gladstone replied as follows :

‘*July '85.*

‘MY DEAR GOSCHEN,

‘The position, from which I have not at this moment retired, entirely warrants the letter you have addressed to me. But I am not sure if you are aware of the prospective independence, which is the hardly-earned prize now within my reach. Most justly do you refer to the closing words of my letter to the Midlothian Association. They supply the key to my present conduct. They certainly had in view some (then) recent utterances. I hope, though I have no right either to demand or to expect, that others who may be in various degrees centres of influence, may be disposed to act upon them.

‘Though I have thus referred to recent utterances, I am not at all sure that I know, as you appear to know, what is the programme of Mr. Chamberlain as a whole; or that I should feel it necessary, if there be such a programme, to pronounce on all the points of it. The coming election offers grave enough matter for consideration, without going far into the future. My indisposition to travel beyond the bounds of need is not due to reserve; but is founded on the fact that my fifty-three years of service, and the (for me) fortunate circumstances of the

moment, absolve me from future cares, unless it should chance that with an emergency in near view there should be a likelihood that I could seriously contribute to meeting it with effect. I think as you perhaps do that there *is* an emergency at hand; and that it is a prime duty of all Liberal statesmen to consider how they can best meet it. My starting point would be what I have now described; it would be affirmative and constructive. I should much desire to learn what are your views, what you can contribute to the common purpose. Will you for this purpose dine here quietly on Tuesday at eight? There shall be no one here except one or two friends, such as will not, I think, be impediments.

'I have spoken of a mode of approaching the subject which would be affirmative and constructive, because I think the mode of saying aye or no on a particular proposition has rather a negative look, and because if anyone has proposed separate National Councils truly deserving that name, I am not yet aware of it.

'Yours sincerely,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

Goschen's disquietude could hardly have been dispelled by Mr. Gladstone's somewhat oracular answer—that his starting-point was 'affirmative and constructive.' In the summer and autumn of 1885 the campaign of speeches raged all over the country till it was brought to an end by the verdict of the ballot boxes in December. The extreme Radicals were led by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, the Whigs or Moderate Liberals by Lord Hartington and Goschen, the whole Liberal Party by Mr. Gladstone, who, without giving any precise forecast of his future policy, was ready to welcome under his wide-spreading 'umbrella,' to use the phrase that Lord Rosebery had made popular, whosoever would on any ground support him at the polls. The

means by which the Conservatives had won office, viz. the alliance effected by Lord Randolph Churchill in the House of Commons with Mr. Parnell and his followers, had injured the character of the Party with the general public, and had offended many of their own men. And when this was followed by the strictures of Mr. Parnell's new friends in office upon the recent courageous and manly administration of Lord Spencer, there was a remarkable outburst of indignation amongst those who thought the maintenance of law and order in Ireland was a matter of too much importance to be treated as a mere incident in the Party game of 'ins' and 'outs.' It had been the hope of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke and some others of the more advanced Radical Party to combine with the Irish Nationalists against 'coercion,' and in favour of some nebulous system of so-called 'National Councils' to be applied to the three kingdoms. But for the moment the tables had been, by Lord Randolph's tactics, completely turned against them. The new Ministry and the Parnellites at once appeared to be on the very best of terms; one evidence of this being the immediate removal from the notice paper of the House of Commons of all obstructive motions and questions put down by Nationalist members. And it was soon to appear that the Irish vote had not only been won for the Conservatives in a House of Commons about to expire, but was to be thrown also on to their side at the approaching General Election, which was expected to determine for the next half-dozen years the course of British politics.

On July 24 nearly three hundred Liberal members of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords entertained Lord Spencer at a banquet at the Westminster Palace Hotel, presided over by Lord Hartington. Goschen,

John Bright, and Sir George Trevelyan were present, but Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke were absent. The dinner was in truth very much of a Whig demonstration against the Conservative and Parnellite alliance made manifest by the hasty dropping of the Crimes Act and by the language of Ministers in the recent Maamtrasna debate with regard to Lord Spencer's administration of the law in Ireland. Amongst those who were present a strong feeling undoubtedly prevailed that Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke were shirking their responsibility for the unpopular acts of the late Cabinet, and had not done their best to support the cause of law and order, or their own colleagues, against the power of the Irish Nationalists. Many Conservatives, disapproving of recent doings in the House of Commons, had wished to join in this demonstration, but it was thought wiser by those who promoted the banquet to retain its purely Liberal character.

Mr. Chamberlain was now free from those restraints of office which many thought he had respected too little whilst still a member of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet. The 'daring duckling' of Tenniel's famous cartoon in *Punch* of June 1883, he was still the favourite of the extreme Radical wing of the Liberal Party. He had regained his independence; he would now of course be entirely within his rights in urging upon the public the acceptance of any policy in which he believed. In the agitation of the autumn of 1884 against the House of Lords his 'plain words to the Peers' had still further endeared him to the foes of aristocratic government. He was, he said, 'grateful to gentlemen who took the trouble to wear robes and coronets,' and were members of 'a picturesque institution'—'ancient monuments which he would be very sorry to deface.' As a merely ornamental part of the Constitution he might find

much to say for the House of Lords; but it had never, he declared, as an active branch of the legislature, done anything but mischief. Himself a Dissenter, he felt that he had an account to settle with that assembly, and he promised that he would never forget the reckoning. In 1885, both before and after the fall of the Gladstone Government, he made a great many speeches all over the country,<sup>1</sup> from which (as he had himself said of the Mid-lothian speeches five years before) the whole substance and doctrine of Radical policy up to date might be collected. Mr. Chamberlain, like every other politician at that time, had his eye on the vastly increased and hitherto untried electorate, to which the destinies of the State were to be entrusted, and it is not without interest to contemplate a quarter of a century afterwards the expectations which one of the ablest of our statesmen had formed in 1885 of the then future of his country. In some respects the lapse of years has justified, in other respects has falsified, Mr. Chamberlain's reading of the signs of the times. He was the acknowledged representative and spokesman of the Radicalism of 1885, whilst the views and principles of moderate Liberalism were urged by Lord Hartington and Goschen. For the moment Mr. Gladstone's leadership of the Liberal Party was recognised on all sides, but it was clear that the two sections of it were sharply at issue upon many questions of great importance which the country would soon have to solve. Which would prevail? Which would win to its side the immense authority of Mr. Gladstone?

Mr. Chamberlain desired absolute manhood suffrage, one man one vote, the payment of Members of Parliament,

<sup>1</sup> The authorised edition of these speeches was published by Routledge & Sons in 1885 under the editorship of Mr. Henry Lucy.

the disestablishment and disendowment of State Churches, free education, the re-establishment on the land by State authority of yeomen and peasant proprietors, a graduated income tax, and the taxation of unoccupied land, of sporting land, of ground rents, and of mineral royalties—not, he said, so much for what these taxes would produce as for the discouragement they would give to arrangements and practices injurious to the community. As to the game laws, 'he could not conceive that any Parliament freely elected by the whole people would tolerate the continuance of this anomalous—he might even say this barbarous—legislation intended to protect the sports of the well-to-do.'<sup>1</sup>

All this sounded very Radical indeed to English ears five and twenty years ago, though as to some of these reforms it should be said that Mr. Chamberlain professed his willingness to wait till opinion further ripened in their favour. It was not merely the proposals themselves, it was also the manner in which they were advocated that profoundly offended the political instincts and special susceptibilities of statesmen such as Goschen. From his very entrance upon a political career, the setting of class against class had, as we have seen, always been in the highest degree odious to him. The Radical leader seemed to Goschen to argue that property, especially landed property, had been wrongfully acquired by landowners from 'the people' to whom it rightfully belonged, and that it was only fitting therefore that 'property should pay a ransom for the security it enjoyed.' That the rich were the enemies of the poor was, in Goschen's eyes, the most false, hateful, and dangerous of doctrines.

During the eventful autumn of 1885, Goschen was in frequent consultation with Lord Hartington. Irish Nationalism

<sup>1</sup> At Warrington, September 8, 1885.

and English Radicalism, he was firmly determined, should not be allowed to capture for their own purposes the Liberal Party and Mr. Gladstone.

‘I have read,’ he writes on September 11, 1885, to the Whig leader before speaking at Hastings, ‘all the late speeches carefully, and am much scandalised by Chamberlain’s last utterances; and his references to the “convenient cant of selfish wealth.” But the main point of my speech ought, I think, to be the necessity of thoroughly laying our account with the Parnellite opposition. What can I say about Gladstone? Shall I say that everyone is longing to hear what he intends to do, and hint that it would be scarcely right to keep us longer in the dark? But my main wish is to speak in such a manner as to strengthen what you said in your last speech. . . . I must speak very decidedly in a moderate sense: in the sense, I mean, in which you spoke, but with this proviso. I am most ready to act on any hints you may give me. . . . It is, I think, quite hopeless to look to carry anything till there has been a regular battle or series of battles with the Irish. Is Chamberlain anxious for union or quite ready for a split?’

Lord Hartington replied on September 13 from Holker Hall, rejoicing that all the speaking was not to be left to Mr. Chamberlain, and saying that ‘Grosvenor<sup>1</sup> had told him that his, Hartington’s, speech at Waterfoot, where he had opened the campaign on August 29, had done good and had given satisfaction to many good Liberals.’ He could only guess, he said, at Chamberlain’s intentions, but was inclined to think he did not want a split, and perhaps hardly felt himself strong enough. Chamberlain’s reply at Warrington (September 8), though objectionable in tone and substance, Lord Hartington found milder than he had

<sup>1</sup> Lord Richard Grosvenor, head Liberal ‘whip’ in the House of Commons; afterwards first Lord Stalbridge.

expected, and showed a desire not to push differences to extremities.

‘When I speak again,’ he continued, ‘I think I shall try and distinguish between the different kinds of schemes of more or less socialistic tendency, and admit that as to some of them, Free Education, for instance, it is a matter for fair argument whether they are fair and right extensions of State or Local Government, or not. I don’t know whether you would be inclined to go on this line at all. I have had some correspondence with Mr. Gladstone, since his return. “He had read my opening speech with much admiration and concurrence,” but regretted that I had thought it necessary to join issue with Parnell so early and in so decided a form, and gave many reasons.’

Mr. Gladstone had prepared an address, which no one but Grosvenor had seen, directed to the issues on which the Liberal Party should go to the country. This Lord Hartington expected to be more satisfactory to him than to Chamberlain; ‘and on Ireland, as to which I had from his language in his letters to me most serious apprehensions, I expect that, if not satisfactory, it will be vague, and little more than recapitulation of what he has already said.’

Goschen, Lord Hartington went on, might well invite Gladstone to declare himself.

‘His letter to me shows that his mind is running on the case of Norway and Sweden, Finland, and Austria-Hungary, and he entreats me not to rest on the debate of 1834, but to inform myself on those historical examples. There can be no objection to informing ourselves about anything; but the direction in which his mind is turned seems to me ominous. However, I do not expect that the address will contain anything directly pointing to these examples.

‘I think that a speech or, better, speeches from you may do immense good; and as you ask my opinion on their

direction I should say it would be most useful to support the positions I have taken up by arguments; not to advance the position and attack Chamberlain more than can be avoided; but to show up some of his fallacies, and also to argue out some of the consequences of Home Rule, or separation, as now explained by Parnell.'

And so throughout the autumn and early winter of 1885 the political battle raged. For the time being the Irish Nationalists were on the side of Lord Salisbury, who was in office as the result of the combination between the Conservatives and Parnellites, effected chiefly by the management of Lord Randolph Churchill. The more nearly the two great Parties balanced, the greater the power of Irish Nationalism. That was the foundation principle of Parnellite tactics. The Conservatives had laid themselves open to well-merited censure for adopting Lord Randolph's cynical advice to get a majority in the House of Commons — 'never mind how.' But it is going much too far to suggest, as Lord Morley of Blackburn suggests,<sup>1</sup> that Lord Salisbury, in his Newport speech, or in any other way, gave any indication whatever that he or the Conservative Party were themselves contemplating a move towards Home Rule. On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone's prospects of success depended upon his power of uniting at the polls men who, boasting the common name of 'Liberal,' yet differed amongst themselves upon questions which would almost certainly call for immediate treatment. Hence studied vagueness and indefiniteness characterised the Liberal leadership. Mr. Gladstone made heroic efforts to preserve and strengthen that 'great instrument for good' — the Liberal Party; but how that instrument was to be employed the Party itself did not know, and its leader studiously avoided telling it.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii.

Probably in no single election in Great Britain in December 1885 was Home Rule the issue upon which the contest was fought; but, nevertheless, the question was more or less in the air, and very many Liberal candidates in their speeches showed that, as with Mr. Gladstone, Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen, the subject was occupying their minds. There were few Liberal members and candidates who did not believe that popular local government might with advantage be extended in Ireland, and many of them did good work in explaining the fundamental difference that existed between treating Ireland as a politically distinct nation from Great Britain, and the developing on the one side and the other of St. George's Channel representative local bodies to deal with local and non-national affairs. Some of the clearest and best of these speeches were made by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, lately Under-Secretary of State for War, who put down his foot firmly on the principle of the single political nationality of the three kingdoms. He was quite prepared, he said, in addressing his countrymen, to give local government such as they had themselves;

'but when we come to the question of giving them a separate Parliament and a separate government, then I confess I see great difficulties, and I do not think that that is likely to be consented to by any Government either Whig or Tory; because it would not be consistent with the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire and the duty to the Crown.'

A Scottish fellow-member, afterwards an active Liberal-Unionist, congratulated him heartily on the clearness of some of his pronouncements in those days of loose and unmeaning political phrasemaking, and received the following encouraging reply:

‘Your letter gave me much pleasure, not only because I found you so “sound” (as I think) on the Home Rule question, but because it shows that even the vile report in the *Scotsman* was intelligible. I was anxious to let off against the glorified “Convention of Royal Burghs” with which Chamberlain and Rosebery threaten us, and my audience quite understood both my arguments and my exquisite points: but as usual there was one stupid man present and he was the Reporter, who evidently did not apprehend the whole thing.’

Goschen’s speeches delivered during the General Election of 1885 in Edinburgh and elsewhere were published early in the following year.<sup>1</sup> The letters he received from innumerable correspondents, friends and strangers, testify to the intense satisfaction and admiration with which those speeches had been read in every part of the country by men of different Party connexions, but who agreed in taking a deep and serious interest in the welfare of the nation. It was not merely the opinions that he held, or the clearness with which he expounded them, that impressed his audiences. He had opposed the extension of the franchise, but no statesman ever showed more real respect for the electorate in the very nature of the appeals he made to them. He never had recourse to mere flattery. He never attempted to rouse prejudices or to pander to selfish interests. He appealed to men’s patriotism, to their love of justice, to their understandings. To the delight of his Edinburgh audiences, he encountered the ‘heckler’ on his own ground. The last thing he wished to do was to evade a question. It was evident that nothing rejoiced him more than free and frank discussion on the merits of any topic of public interest. In the autumn of 1885, when men were

<sup>1</sup> *Political Speeches*. Andrew Elliot. Edinburgh, 1886.

anxiously looking forward to they knew not what in the way of changes and new developments, it was consolatory to feel sure that here was a statesman who saw his path clearly and who could be trusted to act up to his words. The late House of Commons had withdrawn its confidence from Mr. Gladstone; but it had certainly not given it to Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill. The General Election appeared to show that these doubts and uncertainties were as general without as within the walls of Parliament. It was a time of distrust. But here was a man, no great favourite perhaps with Whips or caucuses, who had inspired thousands in every constituency with the belief that he might be trusted. Goschen had expounded those moderate Liberal principles on which he believed the nation might safely build, and would greatly prosper. There was one man, and one man only, who, in his opinion, could lead the moderate Liberals and give their cause success—Lord Hartington. Mr. Gladstone's leadership there was good reason to believe might end at any moment; in any case it seemed highly improbable that it would last long. Should Mr. Gladstone retire, or should he (in 1885 an impossible thought) throw himself into the arms of Parnellites and English Home Rulers, moderate Liberals would be obliged to take the field in earnest. Upon the leadership of Lord Hartington Goschen felt that the cause of moderate Liberalism would depend.

Assuredly, in the autumn and during the elections of 1885 had any Liberal ventured to suggest that Mr. Gladstone was about to embrace Home Rule and to ally himself with Mr. Parnell the charge would have been resented by the Party officials as an insult to the Liberal chief. Had it been believed, it would have been fatal to every chance of his obtaining a majority. Amongst those who congratulated

Goschen on his victory in Edinburgh, men like Lord Spencer, Mr. Bryce, and Mr. Childers, afterwards pillars of the Home Rule cause, were as hearty as the Duke of Argyll, or Lord Camperdown, or any of those who afterwards took up arms for the Union. Mr. Gladstone himself wrote from Dalmeny (November 26) that though he had thought it right not to give any opinion during a contest between two 'Liberal' candidates, he must express his great pleasure, now that it was over, at Goschen's triumphant return as his old friend and colleague. He went on :

'I am glad also to have had an opportunity of free conversation with you on grave contingencies which may soon come into view. The aspect of the elections, as far as they have gone has not been favourable to the most recent brand of advanced Liberalism. But I am bound to say that in my opinion the relative prosperity of Toryism in the English Boroughs has been due in the main to the two Bogies of the Church and Fair Trade, and chiefly the last which is the worst and in every way despicable.'

It was still *possible* that Mr. Gladstone, who had no great love for 'advanced Liberalism' or for the statesmen identified with it, might still steer a moderate course; but those who knew him best were becoming more and more uneasy about him. Uncertainty could not last much longer. Goschen's opponent in Edinburgh, Mr. Costelloe, represented 'advanced Radicalism,' and had the hearty sympathy and support of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, whilst Conservative electors had of course voted for Goschen. At the same time that Gladstone was writing from Dalmeny Mr. W. H. Smith was writing *his* congratulations from the War Office, finding in Goschen's success 'evidence that a courageous man who will not stand on one side, and who will not swim with the stream,

obtains his reward of honour and of confidence.' Amongst all the colleagues of Mr. W. H. Smith, as amongst all the late colleagues of Mr. Gladstone, it would have been too much to expect equal rejoicing. There is, of course, no trace of congratulation to the triumphant moderate Liberal from Lord Randolph Churchill or Mr. Chamberlain! Lord Randolph and Mr. Chamberlain stood for a goodly number in the Tory and Radical ranks.

Fortunately for his country Goschen would not 'stand on one side.' When, in the early summer, Lord Arthur Russell heard certain critics declaring, with reference to Goschen, that in this country a political man must learn to submit his pride and his fancies to one of the two leaders of his time or abstain from politics altogether, he quoted in Goschen's defence the following apposite observations of Taine, and sent the quotation to his friend :

*'Un homme fier souhaite le pouvoir pour exécuter les idées qu'il a, non pour exécuter les idées des autres ; il veut être l'auteur d'une œuvre, non l'instrument d'un caprice. C'est une mince ambition que d'aspirer à état de domestique, et l'on est domestique lorsqu'on tremble sous la rumeur de cent mille malotrus aux mains sales, aussi bien que si l'on s'agenouille sous le sourire auguste d'une Altesse en habit brodé.'*

In another letter (September 7, 1885) Lord Arthur writes of the uneasiness caused him by the language held to him by a member of Lord Salisbury's Conservative Cabinet, who seemed much more ready than Lord Hartington to conciliate Parnell.

'Remember,' he said, 'we have to deal with facts ; the old method of governing Ireland is gone irretrievably. Gladstone, by his egregious folly and vanity, has destroyed the Church and the loyal classes. We warned him in vain. It is not

we who have created the present difficulties ; but we have to deal with them. Coercion Acts are useless in the state to which Gladstone has reduced the country—other means must now be found. Und so weiter, und so weiter,' continues Lord Arthur—' it does seem that Randolph is really dictator ; and probably the Irish question will break up and reconstruct *both* parties.'

On October 21 Lord Arthur writes again :

' We have been at Knowsley and at Hawarden where we saw the Grand Old Man fell an ancient oak, and we reverently gathered the chips that fell from his axe. At Knowsley Lord Derby said to me after a long silence : " The longer I live, the odder I find the English people ! " I did not answer : " And the odder they find you,"—but I thought it. Lord Kimberley asked : " How did you find the great chief when you were at Hawarden ? " " Well I found him leaning towards Home Rule," answered Lord D., " what he calls a National Council ; I confess I don't see my way to it, as I explained at Blackburn." " When I saw him last," said Kimberley, " he was much troubled by the immoral means which were used to bring about the Union ; he felt that a great National sin had been committed and his conscience was troubled." " Oh damn his conscience," answered Lord Derby. (This anecdote is confidential.)'

When the days of polling came, Whigs, Liberals, and Radicals, for the most part, and for the last time for many a long year, voted together. Gladstone, the most popular statesman who had ever led the Liberal Party, was for the last time returned to power by a British majority. For the victory, such as it was, was found to be a hollow one so soon as it became necessary for his Party to advance from vague language to political action. The Nationalist demand for Home Rule had to be answered one way or the other. That policy could not be

explained away by any sophistry. Party exigencies might be great; but trying times were at hand when the arts of political management would count for little, and when the nation would break through mere Party trammels in order to stamp once for all upon the future politics of the United Kingdom the principle of single nationhood. Goschen had supported the Liberal Party: as a Liberal he had stood and won the seat of East Edinburgh against an advanced Radical, as a Liberal he had spoken in Haddingtonshire in support of Mr. Haldane against the Conservative Lord Elcho. His own victory had been an even more overwhelming one than had been expected in the capital of Radical Scotland. In a letter from Seacox Heath his daughter Maude writes her own and her father's thanks to their great friend and political ally in Edinburgh, Mr. A. L. Bruce (the original promoter and most ardent supporter of Goschen's candidature), and describes the triumphant reception given to him on his return to his Kentish home. It was indeed a great personal triumph; but it was, what he valued much more, a triumph for moderate Liberalism. His repose was not to last long. A political cyclone was approaching. The united Liberals might beat, and did beat, the Conservatives; but what political principles would gain the ascendant within the Liberal Party? This, to anyone who could look an inch beneath the surface, was the real political issue of that day, for upon it depended the question, transcending mere Party interests and rivalries, of the direction which the future of the nation and the empire was to take.

Ten days after his own victory in Edinburgh, Goschen had written with little sense of elation to congratulate Lord Hartington, who had also been successful in Lancashire, and commented on the state of affairs.

*December 7, 1885.*

‘I agree with your remark that “the mess is the most inextricable into which a country ever got itself”; and I confess I see no satisfactory end, even if one had to choose a policy for oneself. I see little difference in your views and mine as to the nearest future. 1. I do not think a coalition possible. You say you fancy overtures may be made to us. Does that imply that no overtures will be made to Parnell in the first instance? The Conservatives could not ask help unless they stated they would oppose Parnell’s extravagant demands. 2. I agree with you that it may possibly be right to promise the Government independent support, if they reject the Parnell alliance, and if, as I expect, Gladstone will be ready to grant what you and I would never agree to. All I hear strengthens the impression which the published views of Gladstone convey, that he will be ready to propose something very strong indeed in the direction of Home Rule. It is clearly in his mind. Well then, when he communicates his plan to you, you will have to say at once that you can’t support it, i.e. in the probable event of its being impracticable and wrong. He will then find it difficult to form a Cabinet, or if he forms one, it will be a Radical Cabinet. Will Parnell support him? Even if he does, it may be possible for the moderate men to prevent his carrying out a crude design. But don’t let us allow things to come to that pass. The thing will be to stop any violent plan early, before the mass of the Party are influenced by Gladstone. How a Liberal Government can come into power and hold on I can’t see.’

Before taking steps to turn out the Salisbury Government, ought they not, he says, to ask Gladstone for explanations of his Irish policy? For if the Liberals cannot agree upon this, nothing is to be gained by defeating Lord Salisbury. ‘The fool’s paradise of Harcourt and Gladstone should be shown up. . . .’

When the elections were complete it appeared that whilst the Liberals exceeded the Conservatives in the new House of Commons by eighty-six, exactly eighty-six Irish Nationalists had been returned to support Mr. Parnell. Hence the Salisbury Ministry, which Mr. Parnell in the old Parliament had placed in power, could not in the new Parliament hold office for a day without the consent of the Nationalist leader, unless, indeed, there should be a redressing of the boundary line which still divided Liberals from Conservatives, i.e. those who had hitherto regarded Mr. Gladstone from those who regarded Lord Salisbury as their chief.

Events now began to develop with startling rapidity. On December 17 the *Leeds Mercury* contained a paragraph stating that Mr. Gladstone was prepared to grant Home Rule. On the 20th Goschen wrote from Seacox Heath to Lord Hartington inclosing a cutting from a later number of that paper, which had been sent to him 'as communicated to the *Leeds Mercury* by Herbert Gladstone, not as a rumour but as a fact.' This cutting was as follows:

*'Leeds, Friday, December 18.—Our London correspondent writes: The outlines of the principles upon which Mr. Gladstone contemplates settling the Irish question are admittedly correct. Of course, details have not been definitely fixed; but the main principles upon which Mr. Gladstone intends to proceed are clear. If he attempted to deal with the question at all, he could hardly propose a smaller scheme. The Irish Party will not be satisfied with less than a Legislative Assembly in Dublin. This is the essence of the question, and Mr. Gladstone has very properly decided that, if he deals with the question at all, he must accept that principle. Next to this his great aim is to secure that the new Assembly shall limit itself strictly to Irish affairs, that it shall not trench on Imperial*

interests, and that it shall not oppress minorities. Mr. Gladstone believes that all these objects must be secured, but of course the whole details of the scheme have yet to be worked out. Its success depends on two conditions: its acceptance by the Parnellites and its approval by the Liberal Party. That the Irish Party will close with it, I do not doubt, but there are many Liberals who will give a reluctant assent to the establishment of a National Parliament in Dublin.'

A second paragraph of the paper went on to state that in Mr. Gladstone's opinion

'the Tory Government ought to settle the Irish question in conjunction with the Parnellites, and it was only in case of their failure so to do that he would be prepared to take it up.'

The flying of the 'Hawarden Kite,' as Mr. Herbert Gladstone's communication to the *Leeds Mercury* came to be called, gave rise to a whole crop of misrepresentations in the press as to the views taken by statesmen of Mr. Gladstone's new departure, and Lord Hartington felt it to be his duty to issue an address to his constituents declaring that he had in no degree changed his opinions on the Irish question from those he had expressed only a few weeks before at the time of his election. This step Goschen strongly approved.

'It was, I feel, absolutely necessary. It may have fallen like a shell in Hawarden, but hundreds of Liberals will be grateful to you. I hope now we may be left alone till January 12'; when the new Parliament was to meet. 'By the by,' he added in a postscript, 'I had a note from Forster this morning, who wanted me to tell you if I had the opportunity that he should think it his duty to oppose such a measure as the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin to the best of his ability.'

In a later letter to Lord Hartington (January 4, 1886) Goschen deprecated the raising of an issue with the Conservatives in the House of Commons at an early date, thinking it would be positively ruinous to embark on such a course. The more he thought over the situation, the more he was 'becoming convinced that we must settle the land question, even by some gigantic measure. Lansdowne has sent me a memo. which you also have had. I do not agree with it all; but I am with him in his general view that the land question must be tackled.'

On January 12 the new House of Commons met to re-elect Speaker Peel and to take the oaths, and on the 21st the Queen in person opened Parliament—one of the shortest and most momentous Parliaments in the history of Great Britain.

END OF VOL. I.



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